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JAPAN

DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED BY
THE JAPANESE

WRITTEN BY EMINENT JAPANESE
AUTHORITIES AND SCHOLARS

EDITED BY
CAPTAIN F. BRINKLEY

Vol. III
JAPANESE TYPES

ILLUSTRATED

J. B. MILET COMPANY
BOSTON AND TOKYO

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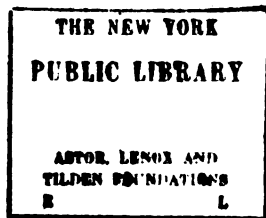
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XIII

SUPERSTITIONS AND DIVINATION

(Concluded)

 AT THE BASE OF THE KATADA Hills in Omi province there lies a lake from whose margin on cloudy nights in early autumn a little ball of fire emerges. Creeping toward the feet of the mountains it grows as it goes, sometimes swelling to a brilliant sphere three feet in diameter, sometimes not developing to more than a third of that size, but always, when it rises to the height of a man's stature above the ground, showing within its glow two faces, to which gradually the torsos of two naked wrestlers, struggling furiously, attach themselves. It takes its way slowly and harmlessly to the recesses of the hills, but resents

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with superhuman force any attempt to interrupt its progress. Once, a wrestler of unconquered fame waited at midnight for its coming, and sprang to grasp it as it passed through the mists. He was hurled to a distance of ten or twelve yards, and barely escaped with his life.

Of the "badger-blaze" it is related that it wanders in the Kawabe district of Settsu on rainy nights, and that uninitiated rustics, mistaking it for the glowing pipe of an ox-driver, hold converse with the badger, who is at all times a sociable fellow, and have even lit their own tobacco at his and puffed it in his company. The numerous legends that Japanese fancy has woven around the will-o'-the-wisp have an interest of their own as illustrating the genius of the people, but our limits of space forbid fuller reference to the subject.

What has thus far been written about superstitions will have probably prepared the reader to hear that the Japanese have always been disposed to attach great importance to divination. It is unquestionable that Confucianism is largely responsible for the growth and persist-

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ence of such an irrational mood. So much time and study did the Chinese sage devote to the Book of Changes (*Yih King*) that the leather thongs holding its leaves together were worn out thrice during his lifetime. The result of his labours, as has been well said, was "to add some inexplicable chapters to an incomprehensible book." This *Yih King* has long been the chief vehicle for divination in Japan. Much of its supposed value lies in the mystery that enshrouds it. Starting from the fundamental idea that the universe had its origin in the union of the male and female principles, the *yin* and the *yang*, it undertakes to elaborate a theory of all physical phenomena and of all moral and political doctrines by means of eight trigrams and sixty-four diagrams. To attempt any full explanation of it would be to supplement vagueness by bewilderment. Chinese literati and foreign students alike having failed to understand it, we may fairly assume that it defies understanding. One point only may be noted, that as the evolution of written ideas in China could be traced in the growth of ideographs, which were

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simply linear combinations, partly systematic, partly arbitrary, so the authors¹ of the *Yih King*, when they sat down to ruminate on the processes of nature and the operations of the intellect, instinctively turned to the grouping of long and short lines as a vehicle for the construction of philosophical formulæ. If the mystical numbers in which Pythagoras sought the elements of realities had been themselves necessarily resolvable into lines, it is probable that he too would have shaped his fancies into diagrams and trigrams instead of expressing them in numerals. Thus much premised, we pass at once to an explanation of the simplest manner of divination, as prescribed by the *Yih King*,² since by following the process a tolerably clear idea is obtained of the manner in which the sexual principle and the trigrams served for purposes of prediction. The Japanese have a very pithy proverb, *ataru mo hakke, ataranu*

¹ The *Yih King* was commenced by Fuh-hsi, thirty centuries before Christ, carried far toward completion by Wan Wang eighteen centuries later, and added to by Confucius.

² The Japanese call the book *Ya-ki*, and the method of divination derived from it *boku-zai* or *boku-zeichiku*; *boku* signifying divination; *zai* and *chiku*, respectively, *lespedeza sericea* and bamboo, of which woods the divining sticks are made.

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mo hakke, which means that the eight trigrams (*hakke*) are right and the eight trigrams are wrong; in other words, that the chances are even as to the worth or worthlessness of divination. But it is not to be denied that the faith of an immense number of people is belied by such an aphorism, and that failures to obtain true glimpses of the future by means of divining rods are generally attributed not so much to inefficacy in the doctrine as to imperfections in the mood of the disciple. The so-called "orthodox" and "intermediate" methods are altogether too complicated to be explained here, but the "abridged" is comparatively easy. It matters little, indeed, which method is employed so far as the method itself is concerned, but since everything depends on the singleness of the diviner's mind and the fervour of his faith, and since ordinary men cannot hope to abstract themselves completely from their environment for any lengthy period, the quickest process is the most likely to give good results. The diviner, having thoroughly cleansed his body, seats himself perfectly upright in a secluded chamber and reverentially grasps

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the fifty divining rods, remembering always that they are sacred media through which the purposes of the all-powerful are revealed by the aid of certain numerical mutations. One of the rods — any one — is separated from the rest and set upright in the rod-rack, thus becoming the “great origin.” The lower ends of the remaining rods are then held with the left hand and their upper ends are slightly dovetailed. With the right hand, thumb inside, fingers outside, the forty-nine rods are now raised above the head. This is the supreme moment. The eyes are closed, the respiration is suspended, the thoughts are concentrated solemnly on the almighty intervention about to be invoked. Presently the senses are pervaded by a thrill indicating that communication with the supernatural has been established, and at that instant the rods are divided into two groups, the celestial and the terrestrial, the “positive” and the “negative.” The right-hand group is laid on the table, and one rod having been removed from it is inserted lengthways between the third and little fingers of the left hand, the figure thus formed being a

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trigram, "heaven, earth and mankind." The left-hand group is then counted in cycles of eight—two by two—and the remainder, including the rod held between the third and little fingers, is noted. Evidently there may be any remainder from cipher to seven, and these eight possibilities commencing with unity and ending with cipher correspond to eight trigrams representing "heaven," "morass," "fire," "thunder," "wind," "water," "mountain" and "earth." The trigram indicated by the remainder is called the "inner complement," and is placed at the bottom of the group which, when completed, will give the desired information. The above process is now repeated and a second trigram is obtained. It is called the "outer complement," and, being placed at the top of the projected group, gives, with the "inner complement," a diagram of six lines, which has its corresponding ideograph. The rods are now once more divided and again counted, this time in cycles of six, and from the remainder another trigram is obtained. Thus gradually a diagram of six trigrams is built up, and from the pages of

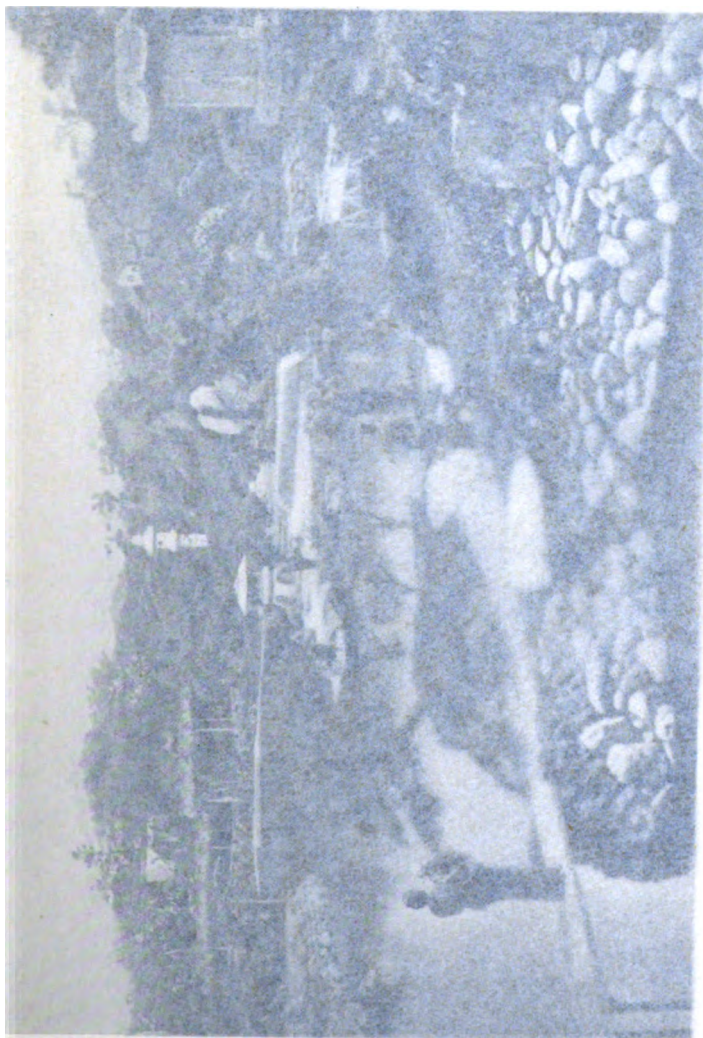
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the *Yih King* used after the manner of a dictionary the corresponding interpretation is taken out.

Professors of this art of divination are numerous,¹ their clients legion. The great adepts live in imposing mansions; the rank and file are content to spread a mat by the roadside, and there with conspicuously disposed paraphernalia of rods and tomes await the casual consultations that timid or bashful folk are glad to hold. The fee varies from two or three *sen* to a *yen*, and in cases of importance very much larger sums are paid. It will readily be conceived that many other systems of vaticination are practised. Two,² which find considerable vogue, may be roughly described as the casting of horoscopes. Both are primarily based on the assumption that every human being has received from heaven a vital

¹ In Tokyo the most famous are Sekirushi (in Shiba district), Chieda (in Asakusa district) and Kishima and Sato (in Shitaya district).

² The *Ten-gen* (heavenly original) and the *To-kiu* (zodiacal essence system). The former was introduced from China in the year 960 A. D.; the latter is a Japanese modification of the former, dating from 1835. A third and cognate system, known as *Kanahi-jutsu* (the element and zodiacal art), is of somewhat later origin than the *To-kiu*. Among living representatives of the *To-kiu* are the widows of two of its formerly renowned professors, and it receives large support from the noble families of Suwa and Tachibana.



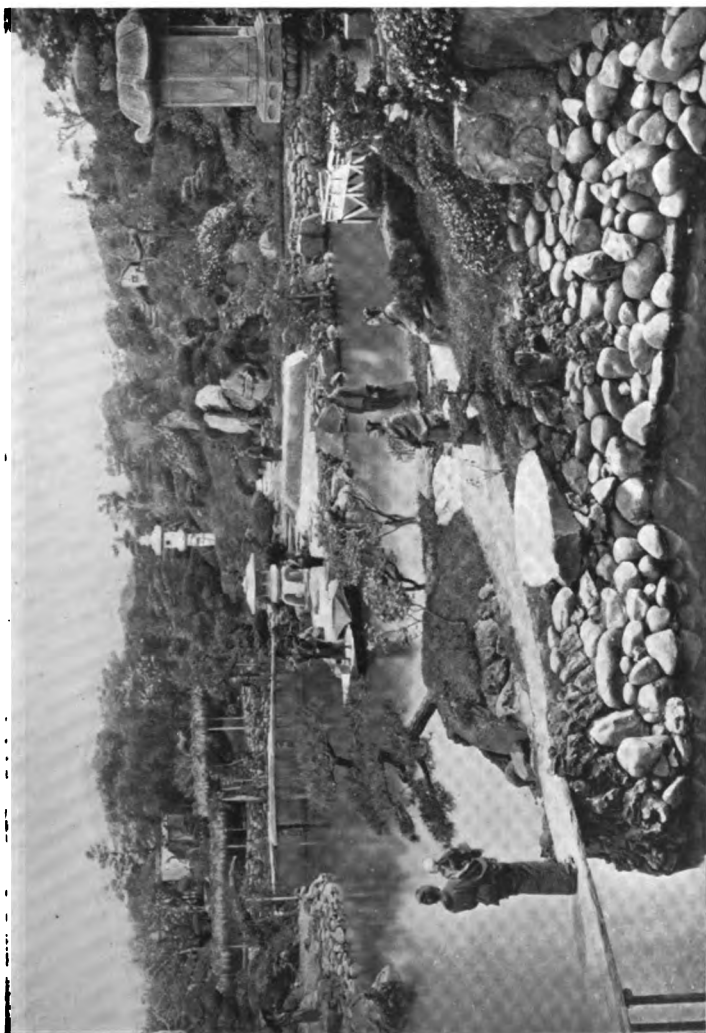
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*The first species are from the area S. Vozhzhin (Suzdal district), Chudskaya (Vladimir district), Krasnaya and Lyubimovskaya (Strelitsya district).

The *Yoku* (probably originally) and the *Tokei* (rodial esence), both of the former, is introduced from China in the year 100 A.D. The *Yoku* is a Japanese modification of the former, dating from 1850. A *Yoku* is a compound system known as *Kan-ho-tokei* (the element of 20) and is thought to have a later origin than the *Tokei*. Among living languages, that of *Tokei* has the values of two of its firmly established prefixes and has a three-ounce suffix, rather than the four-ounce system of *Yoku*.



GARDEN OF LORD HORITA IN TOKYO.

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essence, or spirit (*kā*), by the influence of which his health, his conduct and his moral ability are determined. The hour, the day, the month and the year of a man's birth, when expressed in terms of the elementary and zodiacal series, furnish materials for constructing a horoscope, from which the course of procedure best adapted to the nature of this "spirit" may be mapped out. Thus these forms of divination do not aim so much at furnishing exact predictions as at developing the better side of a man's character and enabling him to avert calamities which the preponderance of his inferior elements would certainly entail. Men of means and position and students on the threshold of independent life or struggling to win academical laurels, have recourse to adepts in these systems, which they regard as more or less useful guides to moral philosophy. The exact methods pursued by a professor in analysing the "prime essence" of an inquirer cannot be defined, the processes of the art being known only to the families in which they have been secretly transmitted from generation to generation and by whose representatives

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they are practised. Physiognomy (*kwan-so*)¹ constitutes a serviceable but not an essential assistant, the vital indications being drawn from the horoscope.

Considered from the point of view of the large part that it plays in the every-day life of the people, the system of "aspect divination" (*hōi-jutsu*) is more important than any of the above. It is a species of astrology based upon the supposition that the supernatural influences which mould a man's destiny emanate from certain regions of the starry firmament, and that good is invited or evil averted by turning toward the auspicious quarter or away from the inauspicious at critical seasons in life. The Gregorian calendar was finally adopted in Japan thirty years ago, but the two series of "terrestrial stems" and "celestial branches" out of which the cycles of the old almanac were constructed, still present to the astrologer and horoscopist ready means of establishing connections between any point of the compass and the date of a birth, and nothing then remains except to assign special attributes

¹ Called also *Ninso-jutsu*, and practised as an independent science.

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to special stars or combinations of stars. It would appear that in remote ages this theory had not emerged from a rudimentary form. Men believed that somewhere away in the north-east stood the demons' gate (*ki-mon*) and that human beings should preserve toward that quarter a demeanour of reverential deprecation — should not face it in sleeping, should not turn their feet thitherward at the commencement of a journey, should not give their houses a northeasterly aspect, should not cultivate the corner of their parks or gardens on which the eyes of the evil spirits looked out from the portals of bad omen. The celebrated monastery of Hiei-zan on the northeast of the Imperial palace in Kyoto, and the scarcely less celebrated temples of Uyeno on the northeast of the *Shogun's* palace in Tokyo, were religious barriers suggested by this superstition; and if any one examines the pleasure grounds surrounding Japanese houses, he will see that the northeasterly quarter is always thickly planted and left without ornamental rockery or invading path. Such evidences of practical demonology afford, however,

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but a slight glimpse of the importance attached by the middle and lower classes, and even by many members of the upper, to the question of celestial quarter. Oshima Sekibun, the chief professor of the science of "aspect divination," is unable, even with the aid of a large band of disciples to furnish oracles for the multitudes that come daily to consult him. There are numbers of sober business men and educated gentlemen in Tokyo—to say nothing of the softer sex and the ignorant—who deem it absolutely essential to preface every important act by recourse to this kind of augury. Before building a house, before selecting a site, before changing from one residence to another, before opening a store, before applying for an official post, before engaging in any industrial or commercial enterprise, before betrothing a son or daughter, before fixing the date of a marriage, before despatching a cargo, before setting out on a journey, before preparing for an accouchement, before any of these things, and, in the case of the more superstitious, before any act that lies outside the most ordinary routine of every-day

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existence, the advice of the aspect diviner has to be sought.¹

Prominence has here been given to modes of divination which may still be classed among the important customs of the nation. But others of great interest, though now more or less obsolete, deserve passing notice. Among these the oldest appears to have been scapulimancy, or divining by the cracks and lines in the scorched shoulder-blade of a deer. It is suggestive that the same method of discerning the future was practised in ancient times in Tartary, Mongolia,

¹ A Tokyo newspaper recently published a statement illustrating the uses to which diviners are put. A man having purchased a quantity of vegetables, hired a cart for their transport. Needing to make a diversion from the direct route homeward, he bade the carter wait at a certain place. The carter seized the opportunity to abscond with the vegetables. When their owner discovered his loss he repaired to the house of a diviner, obtained information as to the whereabouts of the thief, and hastening off, apprehended him in the act of selling the vegetables. Another story of contemporary doings shows the adroitness of the diviners in accounting for their failures. A person in good circumstances learned from a horoscopist the exact date of his death. He regulated his affairs accordingly, spent his money lavishly, and having procured a coffin and paid his funeral expenses, lay down to await the supreme moment. It came and passed uneventfully. He therefore proceeded to upbraid the diviner. The latter listened calmly to his reproaches and finally asked: "May I inquire whether you devoted any of your fortune to charitable objects?" "Certainly," replied the other. "Believing that my opportunities of spending money were brief, I gave away considerable sums in that way." "Just so," said the diviner. "But you failed to observe that benevolent deeds establish a claim upon heaven's protection, and that they would surely be rewarded by the lengthening of your life."

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Arabia, Lapland and even England,—(known as “reading the spealbone”). Tortoise-shell was subsequently substituted for shoulder-bones, a change especially convenient for women, who, by burning the ends of their tortoise-shell combs and observing the divergence or convergence, regularity or confusion, of the lines on the charred surface, drew inferences about the course of their love affairs. Another method, much practised by girls, was to stand by the roadside in the evening and construct auguries by patching together such fragments of wayfarers’ talk as were wafted to their ears. This *tsugiura*, or road divining, has quite gone out of vogue. The term is now applied to mottoes placed within envelopes of sweet biscuit, after the “cracker” fashion of the West. But in former days the doubts of the heartsick were often resolved and the aspirations of the village belle encouraged by such glimpses of fate’s purposes. Sometimes a rod was planted in the ground to personify the deity of roads—the god formed from Izanagi’s staff which he cast behind him to stay the demons as they pursued him from the under-

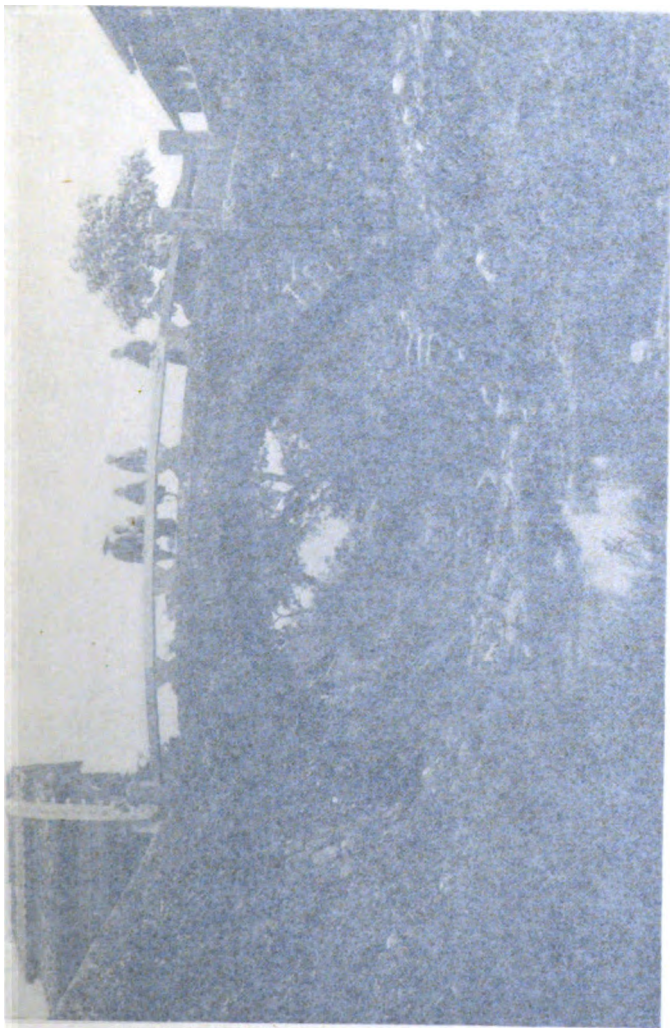
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world. Offering having been made to this rod, the conversation of the passers-by was earnestly listened to. Another method of later origin required the co-operation of three maidens. Repairing to a place where roads crossed, they thrice repeated an invocation to the deity of ways, marked out a space over which they scattered rice to drive away evil spirits, and then, having drawn their fingers along the teeth of a boxwood¹ comb, stationed themselves, each on a different road, waiting to catch the words of people going by. Dreams, strange to say, do not seem to have been regarded in the light of important supernatural revelations, though auguries were occasionally drawn from them, and the service of interpreting them has, of course, found professors. Sometimes an augury was sought by standing under a bridge and listening to the patter of feet overhead; sometimes the familiar device of pitching coins was employed, and sometimes divine revelations were supposed to be conveyed in the sounds made by a priest whis-

¹ The Japanese term for boxwood (*tsuge*) means also "to tell." Hence the above custom.

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ting by inhalation. It need scarcely be said that the old custom of trial by ordeal, to which allusion is made in previous chapters, has disappeared, but there still exists a device for detecting guilt which, though not disfigured by physical cruelty, partakes of the nature of an ordeal. It is called *sumi-iro*, or the "colour of ink." Let us suppose that a theft has occurred in a household. Then each domestic is required to write a certain word with the same brush and the same solution of Indian ink. The writing should take place, if possible, in the presence of the diviner, but that condition is not essential. Conscience is supposed to betray its working in the lines of the ideographs written. There is in this device a practical element that often secures the desired result. It is on record that when the Emperor Inkyo (411-458 A. D.) commanded the ordeal of boiling water as a means of detecting usurpers of noble names, the guilty folks ran away rather than submit to the test. Something of the same kind frequently happens when the *sumi-iro* device is employed; but, under any circumstances, the tracing of an ideograph involves such an effort



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It is not necessary to be told secretly, to say that the *san-i-iro* is a device for detecting falsehood, by which, by order, to which, and by means of the present chapter, has been described. It is not, however, still exists a device for detecting falsehood, though not disguised by the name of *san-i-iro*. The nature of an ideograph is such, as to show the "colour" of the truth, and to show that a theft has occurred. The *san-i-iro* is an ink, which is required to be used in writing with the same brush and the same ink, as the ink used in ink. The writing is such, as to be possible, in the presence of the *san-i-iro*, that condition is not essential. The *san-i-iro* is used to betray its working in the *san-i-iro* ideographs written. There is in the *san-i-iro* a practical element that often secures the desired result. It is on record that when the Emperor Inkjo (411-453 A. D.) commanded the use of boiling water as a means of detecting the falseness of noble names, the guilty folks ran away rather than submit to the test. Something of the same kind frequently happens when the *san-i-iro* device is employed; but, under any circumstances, the tracing of an ideograph involves such an effort



A PICTURESQUE STONE BRIDGE.

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of muscular directness and undivided attention that the quality of a suspected person's writing may often have much significance.¹

The reference that we have just made to the ordeal of boiling water brings us to the confines of a wide realm of superstitions based upon *Shinto* belief in the omnipresence of the tutelary spirits and translated into visible phenomena through the agency of hypnotism. The Japanese seem to have discovered, at a very early period, that an abnormal nervous condition can be produced by concentrated attention and abeyance of the will, and like many other peoples to whom a scientific explanation of the fact had not presented itself, they interpreted the strange condition to mean spirit-possession. Prayer and incantation, preceded by purificatory rites and assisted by violent finger-twistings, were the means employed to pro-

¹ The simplest and perhaps the most senseless method of divination is by the abacus (*soroban*). Its use is confined to cases of illness. To the number of years that the patient has lived are added the numbers of the month and the day of his birth. The sum thus obtained is multiplied by 3 and divided by 9. If the remainder is 3 or a smaller number, recovery is considered certain. If it is a number between 3 and 6, the case is grave, the danger growing as the remainder ascends. Equal division is counted as a remainder of 9, and signifies certain death.

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duce this mesmeric state, and the person reduced to it became a spirit medium, gifted with the power of performing miracles, of uttering predictions and of curing diseases. The range of miracles was limited to three—sprinkling boiling water over the body without feeling the heat; ascending, on bare feet, a ladder of razor-sharp sword blades, and walking with naked soles over a bed of live coals,¹ all of which are constantly practised by *Shinto* priests and devotees to this day. It must be noted that these performances do not seem to have been degraded by charlatans in any era into mere money-making spectacles. Their object has always been to vivify religious faith. As for the faculty of vaticination supposed to be developed during the sacred trance, its uses are of the simplest character. It might, indeed, be more accurately described as *clairvoyance*, since it discloses events actually happening beyond the range of normal observation rather than events still lying in the lap of the future. For the rest, it does not occupy any prominent place in the

¹ Mr. Percival Lowell, in "Occult Japan," gives lengthy and most picturesque accounts of these and other cognate performances. They are called *Kami-waza*, or deeds of deities.

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usages or thoughts of the nation. The healing power, however, is frequently invoked ; for all sickness and disease being attributed to the influence of evil spirits, it seems natural and proper that the tutelary deities should be summoned to drive out these demoniacal tormentors. We confine ourselves here to merely sketching in outline the connections that the *Shinto* creed thus undertakes to establish between its disciples and supernatural beings. To fill in the details of the picture would involve long descriptions of rites and incantations which precede and accompany spirit-possession, but are only accessories, having much the same relation to the central phenomenon as the faceted glass held before a subject's eyes in Europe has to the mesmeric state induced by staring at it.

It will be evident from what has been here set down that the Japanese are an emphatically superstitious people. In their every-day life they tread very closely upon the confines of the supernatural world. Whatever estimate of their intellectual development the fact suggests, it is none the less a fact. Possibly, when we recall the his-

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tory of Occidental morality from the days of the Alexandrian Platonists to the times of Swedenborg and Werner, and the era of American spirit-materialisers and astrologers, we may be less disposed to pronounce harsh judgments on the traditional mysticism which has been handed down from generation to generation in the secluded family circle of the Japanese nation.

XIV

FESTIVALS



MODERN JAPAN IS A COUNTRY of traditional festivals; "acts of worship" the people call them, and they certainly have their foundation in a religious observance, but so far as general revelry, feasting and rejoicing are concerned, they present all the features of a *fête*, or even of a carnival. Annually or biennially the tutelary deities of a particular parish are taken out for an airing and the whole of the parishioners participate in the picnic. That is the most accurate definition that can be briefly given of the *matsuri*, to which Western writers have already devoted so many pages of description. The "worship of the deities" and the "administration of State affairs" used to be synonymous. Both were called *matsuri*, and both continue to be so called by the vulgar, though distinctive terms

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now find a place in the vocabulary of the literate. If, then, religious rites performed by the sovereign within the precincts of the palace insured the successful conduct of national business, the same principle prompted the people to invoke, by similar means, heaven's influence in the cause of household prosperity, industrial success, and individual happiness. History does not indicate the origin of the idea that to carry the gods in triumphal procession was the most fitting form of popular devotion. But history does show that sackcloth and ashes were never credited with any attractions in the eyes of the supernatural powers, and that the Japanese, even in very early ages, judged the brighter aspects of life to be as pleasant to immortals as to mortals. We obtain that knowledge of the nation's mood incidentally and not very agreeably. Annalists tell us, not of the glories of the *matsuri*, but of its abuses. As early as the eighth century, the spring and autumn festivals of the North Star had to be officially interdicted because of immoral license on the part of the devotees, and a similar prohibition became necessary a hundred years later when the people's

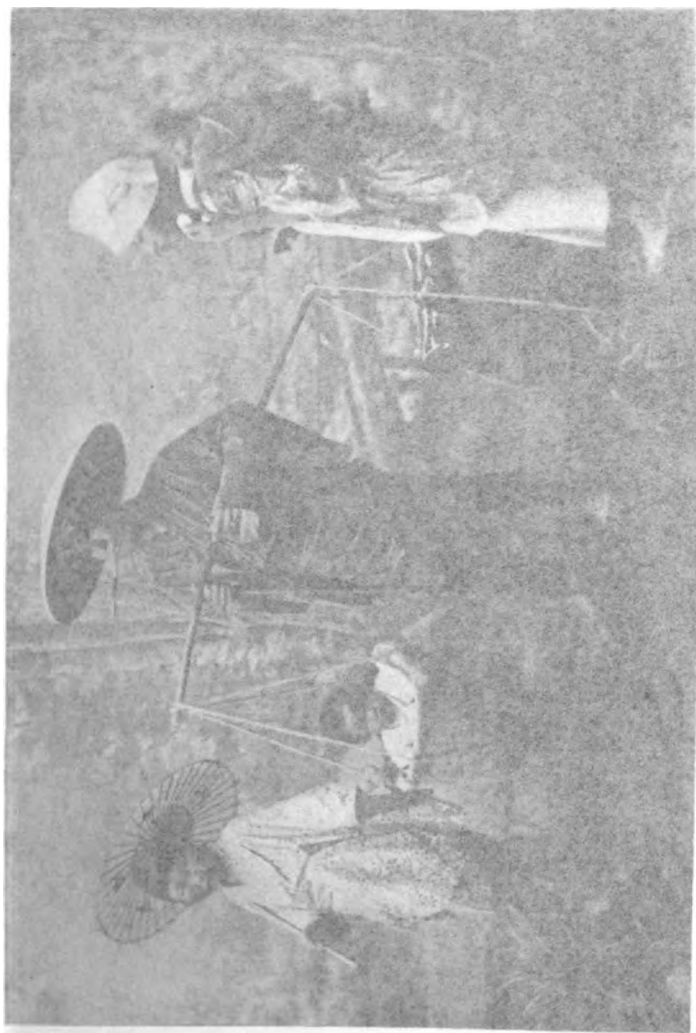
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methods of asking for blessings had become so extravagant that there stood in every street in Kyoto a "treasury" decorated with pictures of the "Seven Gods of Fortune," and a pair of images before which incense was burned and flowers were offered amid circumstances that should sometimes have repelled rather than propitiated the deities. Indeed, any one visiting the great shrines of Ise to-day, will be surprised to find that *Lais* opens her doors to the pilgrim almost within sight of the sacred groves, and that to accept her invitation does not disqualify him in his own eyes, nor in the eyes of any one else, for the subsequent achievement of his pious purpose. A single act of lustration restores his moral as well as his physical purity, and with such an easy remedy in sight, the sins of the flesh seem only transiently hurtful. It is not to be supposed, however, that unsightly excesses are obtrusive features of the *matsuri*. On the contrary, they are for the most part conspicuous by their absence. History's mention of them notes the exception, not the rule, and is referred to here merely as indicating that the gala spirit presided

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at these festivals twelve or fifteen centuries ago just as prominently as it presides now.

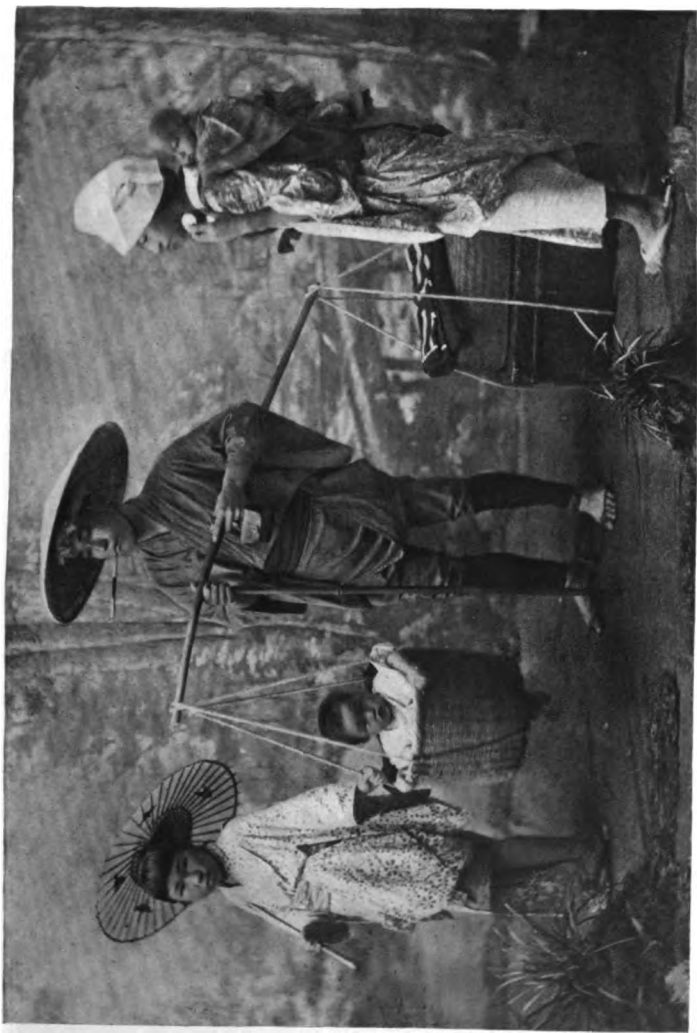
The people enjoy and exercise all the freedom of hosts at these big picnics. Having duly provided for the deity, or deities, in whose honour the display is primarily organised, the parishioners consider themselves at liberty to entertain any other guests they please to summon from the realm of spirits or the region of allegory. For the accommodation of each principal and each accessory deity there is a sacred palanquin, a *mikoshi*. It is a shrine on wheels ; a shrine covered with black lacquer, undecorated save that the insignia of the inmate are blazoned in gold on the panels of the doors, and that the ends of the pillars and roof-tree are wrapped in finely chased and richly gilt copper. Before and behind the shrine stand *torii* of rose-red lacquer ; a balustrade of the same colour encircles it, and on the roof perches a golden phoenix with outspread wings. The effigy of the deity is placed within this shrine in sacred seclusion, and to fifty men wearing sacerdotal vestments the duty of bearing the *mikoshi* is intrusted. But there is a differ-



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the emperor, who, as emperor, presides over the august ceremonies, and as emperor, presides now.

The emperor may not exercise all the functions of these big men. Having duly performed his duty, or duties, in whose honour the country is primarily organised, the passion is left to themselves at liberty to entertain by themselves, they please to summon from the region of fiction or the region of allegory. For the representation of each principal and each deity, namely, duty, there is a sacred palanquin, a *zishiki*. It is a shrine on wheels; a shrine covered with black lacquer, undecorated save that the stigma of the innote is blazoned in gold on the panels of the doors, and that the ends of the pins and roof-tree are wrapped in finely chased and richly gilt copper. Before and behind the shrine stand *tsûji* of rose-red lacquer; a balustrade of the same colour encircles it, and on the roof perches a golden phoenix with outspread wings. The effigy of the duty is placed within this shrine in sacred seclusion, and to fifty men, wearing sacerdotal vestments the duty of bearing the *zishiki* is intrusted. But there is a differ-



A FAMILY PICNIC.

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ence in the people's treatment of their own special guests. These are not enclosed in the gloom of a shrine ; they are mounted on high, overlooking the multitude of merry-makers and looked up to by them, and they ride each on a "car of gentle motion" (*nerimono* or *dashi*), a magnificent and colossal affair, its dimensions and gorgeousness affording a measure of the piety and prosperity of the parish. Described in simplest outline, the *dashi* is a rectangular wooden house mounted on a four-wheeled wagon. As for its details, they defy description. From sill to eaves it is a mass of elaborate carving and rich decoration. Brilliant brocades, portly silk tassels, snow-white *go-hei* and wreaths of gold-and-silver flowers fill the intervals between deeply chiselled diapers, flights of phoenixes, processions of tortoises and lines of dragons. Immediately under the roof, and thus raised some fifteen feet above the street, a broad platform affords space for fifty or sixty people, and springing from pyramidal drapery at the centre of the artistically carved ridge pole, a tapering pillar of great height supports a canopied bracket for the figure of the

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sacred guest to whom the *dashi* is dedicated. It is impossible to convey in words any adequate idea of the grace of proportion and sobriety of grandeur sometimes attained in the construction and ornamentation of these cars. As for the guests whose effigies are thus carried aloft, they belong, for the most part, to the galaxy of national heroes or the catalogue of industrial and commercial symbols. Each parish naturally has its own particular pets and its own special obligations. For example, the festival of Sano, one of Tokyo's great biennial carnivals, is held in a year designated by the sign of the cock and the monkey in the two cycles.¹ Hence there is a *dashi* for each of these zodiacal conceptions. There are also *dashi* for Benten, the goddess of matrimony ; for Kasuga Riujin, the god of

¹ Time used to be measured in Japan by cycles of sixty years. There were also "year periods" of arbitrary length, determined generally by the reign of a sovereign. The *Meiji* period, or "era of enlightenment," which began at the Restoration in 1867, is an example of these arbitrary divisions. For the purpose of constructing the sexagenary cycle, two separate series of symbols were used, one of ten, the other of twelve, signs. The former consisted of the five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal and water), each element having a "senior" and a "junior;" the latter, of the twelve zodiacal signs (rat, bull, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, horse, goat, ape, cock, dog and bear). The method of combining the two series of symbols so as to construct a cycle of sixty years need not be described here,

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the sea ; for Shizuka Gozen, the brave mother of Yoshitsune ; for Kamo, the Kyoto deity ; for Tomyo Ichirai Hoshi, the renowned priest ; for Kumasaka Chohan, the prince of mediæval burglars ; for Jingo, the conquering empress ; for the treasure ship with its crew, the Seven Gods of Fortune ; for Ushiwaka and Sojobo, the young hero and his holy fencing master ; for a hammer and a weight ; for a big saw ; for a tea-whisk ; for a whaling junk ; for an axe and sickle, symbols of the crafts, trades and occupations most affected by the inhabitants of the districts through which the procession winds its leisurely way on every alternate 15th of June (old calendar). The tutelary deities of the Sano district, when not taking part in these periodical picnics, inhabit a shrine on the summit of a profusely wooded hill approached by an avenue of cherry trees and tended by Buddhist and Shinto priests in coöperation. But the effigies that ride on the *dashi* and the *dashi* themselves are kept in the houses of leading citizens. Each car, each figure, each symbol, has its history, and every properly educated parishioner knows that history. He can tell how the

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finely modelled *Kankodori* (cock on drum), kept in Odemma-cho, has five-hued plumage, whereas the Kanda cock is pure white; how the monkey, which ought to take precedence of the cock, if the order of the terrestrial and celestial cycles were strictly observed, was obliged, by edict of the *Shogun*, to cede the *pas* to its bright-feathered companion; how two lifelike monkeys, a male and a female, emerge alternately from their retreat in Koji-machi¹ to take their places in the procession, but how neither can compare with the wonderful monkey of Minamitemma-cho,¹ modelled in the old days by that peer of puppet-makers, Hyoshi Washihei, of which, alas! only the nose and eyes now remain, but which has a not greatly inferior successor, the work of Kaku-muro Eiga; how in Koji-machi there is also preserved a monster elephant, fashioned three and a half centuries ago by a Korean craftsman, and how it used once to be a prominent object in the procession, three men within each leg, and a band of musicians in Korean costume preceding it. The genuine Tokyo man — the *Edokko*, or child

¹ The name of a street in Tokyo.

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of Edo, as he loves to call himself—and the orthodox citizen of aristocratic Kyoto have a thousand traditions to relate about these festivals, a thousand respectful tales to tell about their paraphernalia, and each city regards them as the red-letter day of its chronicles. It will not fall to the lot of many of our readers to see one of the great *fêtes*, and, indeed, their glory, like the glory of so many of Japan's old institutions, is rapidly passing away. Let us then set down the order of the Sano procession.

Two large and two small *hata* (strips of white cotton cloth, from one and one half to two feet wide and from ten to thirty feet long, fastened sailwise to bamboo poles and having the names of the tutelary deities inscribed in immense ideographs).

A glaivesman and a spear-bearer.

Two big drums carried by eleven men.

Two men with *hyoshi-gi* (wooden blocks for striking together).

Two flautists.

A Dog of Fo (*Shishi no Kashira*), borne by twenty-four men.

A *Shinto* priest on horseback.

Three gigantic spears, borne by thirty-two men.

A *Shinto* priest on horseback.

The sacred horses of the principal deities.

The sacred sword.

Three *Shinto* priests on horseback.

Attendants on the Shrine.

Mounted priests.

Two musicians with *Tengu* (mountain genii) masks.

Sacred Palanquin, borne by fifty men.

The deity's rice-box : two bearers.

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The deity's banquet table ; six bearers.

Shinto priest on horseback.

Attendants on the Shrine.

Thirty leading citizens in ceremonial costume.

Thirty inferior *Shinto* priests in sacerdotal costume.

Two bearers of *gohei*.

Girl-child richly apparelled, riding in palanquin.

Two men with *hyoshi-gi*.

Sacred Palanquin, borne by fifty men.

The deity's rice-box, borne by three men.

The deity's table, borne by eight men.

Attendants on the shrine.

Mounted priest.

Thirty inferior priests in sacerdotal costume.

Two bearers of *gohei*.

Girl-child, richly apparelled, in palanquin.

Three men with *hyoshi-gi*.

Sacred Palanquin, borne by fifty men.

The deity's rice-box, borne by two men.

The deity's table, borne by six men.

Mounted *Shinto* priest.

Ten Buddhist priests in armour, on horseback.

The Lord High Abbot, in canonicals, in a palanquin.

The deity's four-doored palanquin.

The deity's ox-carriage.

Glaivesmen and spearsmen.

The *dashi*, each drawn by from three to six black oxen with red and white trappings, and by an indefinite multitude of men, quaintly costumed and chanting as they pull ; and each having on its platform from thirty to sixty professional musicians, dancers and actors, dressed in rich costumes, and posturing, dancing and singing, to accompaniment of flute and drum, whenever the *dashi* halts.

Such is the organisation of the parish picnic.
The " gently going cars " move with the utmost de-

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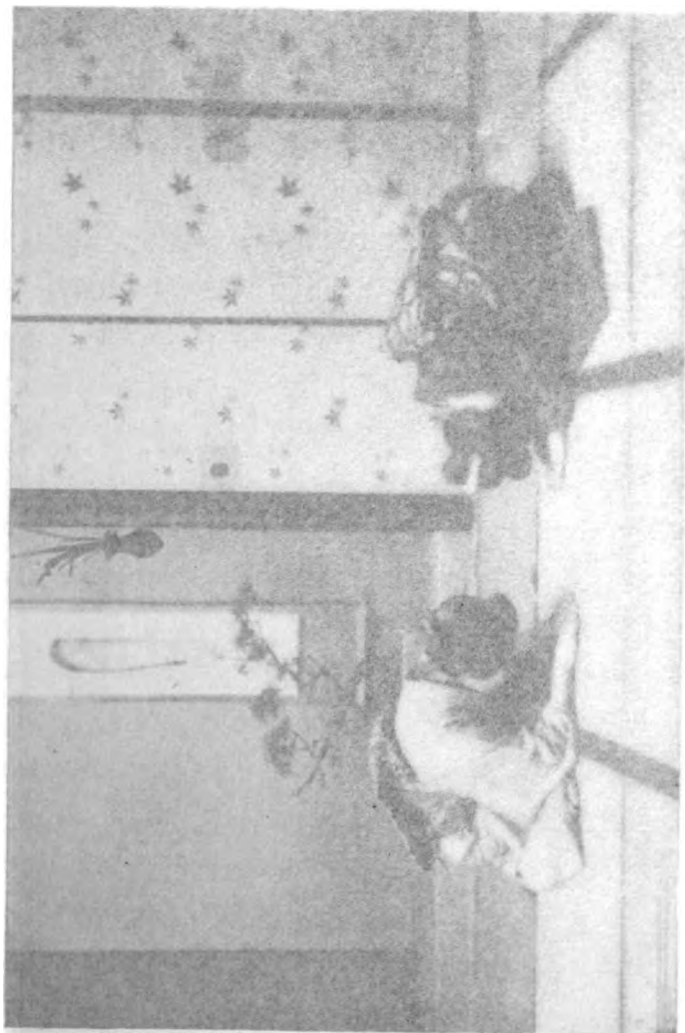
liberation, pausing here and there while the drums beat, the flutes play and the dancers dance, so that the intervals of rest are filled with the sounds of music and with the applause of merry crowds; the intervals of motion with the swelling chant of the *dashi*-drawers. One hundred and sixty streets constitute the Sano parish. They contribute, for the purposes of the procession, forty-five bands, each of fifty youths, chosen by lot. Two days before the festival the citizens begin to prepare their houses. The view places on the roofs are fitted up; the lintels are draped; the mats are overspread with whatever of gay covering the family possesses; a background of glowing richness is made by ranging gold-foil screens in all rooms opening upon the street, and from the eaves as well as from poles along the route, red-and-white paper lanterns are suspended. It is a time of general feasting. The householder violates hospitality's fundamental principles if he fails to invite his friends from the less favoured quarters of the city, and every father takes care that his unmarried daughters shall be dressed in the costliest and most pic-

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turesque garments within reach of his purse. From first to last there is no note of asceticism to disturb the glad harmony. For one day, indeed, —the day before the procession,—the parishioners are supposed to fast, but since their fasting is limited to avoiding meat and vegetables of the onion family, which things are regarded as impure, the flesh is not perceptibly mortified.

Even more important and elaborate is the Kanda festival, which absorbs Tokyo's attention during a great part of the ninth month in the alternate years of the Sano celebration. Long before the *fête*, preparations are busily commenced —lanterns hung out; *nobori*¹ raised; casks of *saké* and boxes of macaroni piled up to feast the folks in the procession, and all the great *modistes* and *coiffeurs* of the capital engage in contriving for the daughters of their customers costumes and head-dresses that shall eclipse records and rivals alike. In nothing is Tokyo

¹ The *nobori* is a species of flag, or standard. A strip of cotton cloth, varying in length from three or four feet to thirty or forty, and in width from a few inches to a yard, is fastened at both ends to bamboo rollers and attached lengthwise to a long bamboo pole capped with a gilt ball. On the cloth large ideographs designating the occasion are inscribed. The *nobori* looks like an extravagantly elongated sail bellying in the wind.

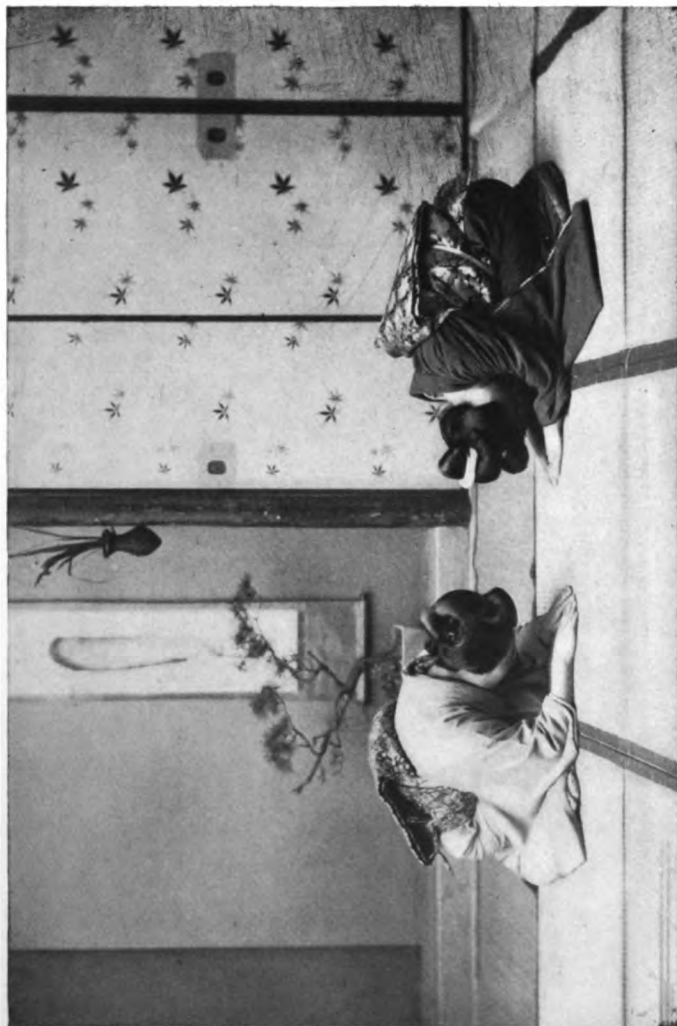


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CEREMONY ON THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF A GUEST.

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more recklessly extravagant than in the sums it lavishes for its daughters' adornment on these grand occasions. A tradesman does not exceed the sanction of custom when he spends a tenth part of his annual income on the dress of one little daughter. The Sano festival inspires similar but less costly effort, for the deities' outing lasts only one day, whereas in the Kanda parish the sacred palanquins and the *dashi* are three days *en route*. A special feature of the Kanda *matsuri* is a band of *danseuses* (*geisha*) who follow the *dashi* and, from time to time, give displays of their skill. They are called *tekamai*, the name of an ancient dance, consisting chiefly of graceful hand-waving. In the course of centuries, performers as well as performance have come to be designated by the same term. These dainty little lasses do not robe themselves for the purposes of the festival in the delicately hued garments and glowing girdles with which they know so well how to enhance the lamp-light effect of their charms. They dress in the small-sleeved tunic, tight-legged trousers and narrow cincture of the common workman

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(*shigoto-shi*), and it is their coy fancy to ape the sombre hue as well as the ungraceful shape of that low fellow's habiliments. But beyond the bounds of cut and colour their feminine instinct rises in vehement rebellion. The tunic and the girdle become meadow-lands of embroidered bloom and verdure; things of costly loveliness to be cheered by the delighted crowd, applauded in private by the Don Juans of the district, and discussed despairingly by chagrined rivals. There is a hidden significance in the presence of the arch and innocent-looking *tekamai*. It is a lover that pays for her elaborate and most ephemeral costume; it is a lover that cuts off her raven tresses,—for even to queue and top-knot the masculine mode is affected,—and it is a lover that defrays the charges of her idle life and the fees of her employers until her hair grows again to evening-party length. So, while she seems to proclaim her religious devotion, she in reality parades her professional successes.

In describing these festivals no lengthy mention has been made of the special deities

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worshipped. The omission is appropriate, for, as the reader has of course perceived, the religious element constitutes but an insignificant fraction of the *fête* in Japan. Sano and Kanda both revere Oana-muchi and Sukunahikona, immortal descendants of the sun goddess, and look for prosperity and happiness as the guerdon of these splendid *matsuri*. But another spirit is included among the objects of worship at the Kanda ceremonial—the spirit of Taira-no-Masakado. This is a name heinously conspicuous in Japanese history as the name of the only subject whose hand was ever raised in open rebellion against his sovereign. Masakado's brief career of madness belongs to the annals of the tenth century. He fell doing battle with Taira-no-Sadamori on the plains of Shimosa, and his head was carried to Kanda for burial. Of such a hero is the effigy, enshrined with every mark of honour among the divine niches at the Kanda festival. We have seen, too, that one of the tutelary ghosts in the Sano parish is Kumasaka Chohan, a burglar of mediæval notoriety. It may well be asked what kind of people they

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are who pay divine honours to the memory of arch traitors and villanous malefactors. The question has been thrust upon foreign attention of late years. Early on the morning of Feb. 11, 1889, the Minister of Education, Viscount Mori, one of modern Japan's most enlightened statesmen, was about to leave his residence for the purpose of proceeding to the palace, when a youth of twenty-five stabbed him fatally with a kitchen knife. The terrible success of the deed was enormously enhanced by the nature of the occasion, for the nation waited to receive on that day its first constitution, and the Minister of Education would have taken a prominent part in the grand pageant had not a murderer's hand arrested his steps. Nishino Buntaro, the assassin, fell under the swords of the minister's guards and was buried at Ten-no-ji behind the temple groves of Ueno. It appeared that his crime had been prompted by an act of irreverence which Viscount Mori was said to have committed at the Great Shrine of Ise a few months previously. The youth had conceived a fanatical idea that the duty

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of avenging the outraged deities devolved on him, and he discharged it with fanatical courage. Scarcely had he been consigned to the grave when the citizens of Tokyo began to pay visits to his tomb. Tradesmen, artisans, but, above all, actors, wrestlers, dancing girls, fencing masters and youthful politicians, flocked thither, so that every day a new forest of incense-sticks smoked and a fresh garden of flowers bloomed before the sepulchre. Foreign observers of the strange pageant stood aghast. Was it conceivable, they inquired, that civilised people should worship at the tomb of a murderer and pay homage to the memory of an assassin? It seemed, on the one hand, as though the masses of Japan hid savage instincts beneath a surface of courtesy and refinement; on the other, as though a government that permitted such demoralising displays must be very feeble, and a nation that fêted the murderer of a minister very disaffected. All such constructions and inferences were based on ignorance of Japanese character. The pilgrims to Nishino's tomb obeyed the same principle that assigns a niche

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in the Kanda shrine to the image of a great rebel and a place in the Sano procession to the effigy of a notorious robber. Daring and prowess, in whatever forms displayed, are dear to the Japanese. The act of Nishino Buntaro appealed strongly to their sense of the picturesque. An educated youth, who had hitherto led an unobtrusive, decorous and law-abiding life, without political friends, without resources other than those possessed by the humblest subject, made his way into the residence of a prominent Minister of State at a moment when the inmates were all on the alert, when the whole city was *en fête*, when the streets were crowded with soldiers and policemen, and, in obedience to an instinct of reverential patriotism, struck down the great man with the weapon of a common scullion, within sight of armed guards and at the very moment when the minister, dressed in full uniform, his breast glittering with orders, was about to take a leading place in the Imperial palace among a body of statesmen associated for a purpose that was destined to make them famous as long as their country had a history. It is scarcely

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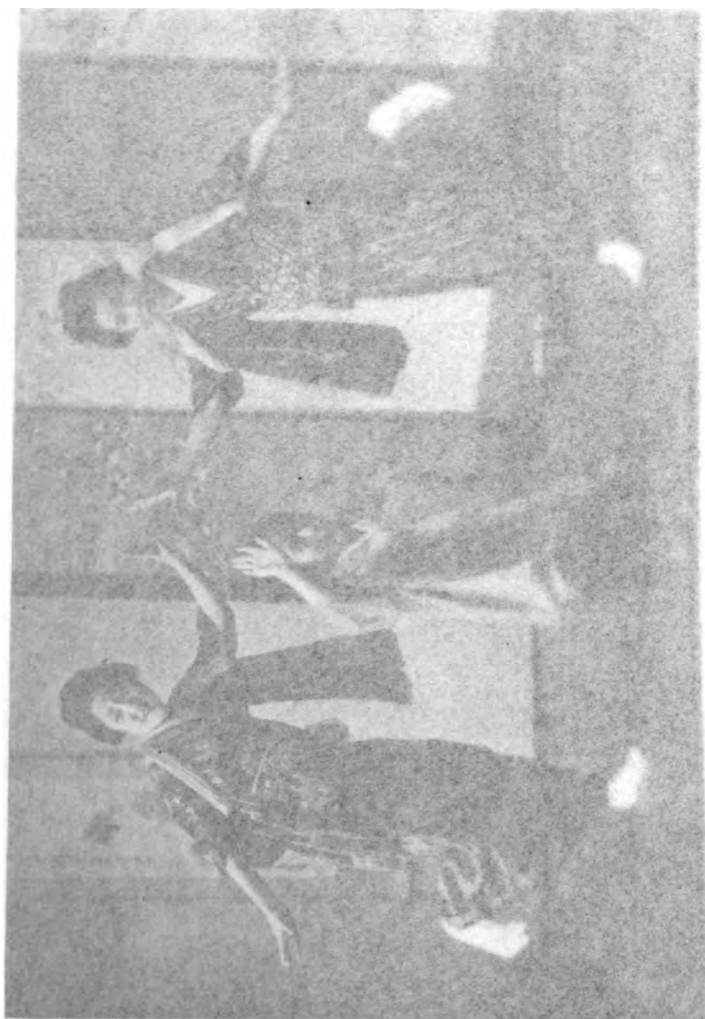
possible to imagine a more striking contrast between instrument and achievement. What did this object lesson teach to the average Japanese? Not that assassination is admirable or bloodshed praiseworthy, but that weakness, insignificance and friendlessness constitute no effective barriers to signal success if they be retrieved by daring, resolution and self-reliance. It is to be endowed with a measure of the spirit of Nishino, Masakado and Kumasaka that the Japanese prays when he worships at the tomb of a murderer and makes offerings at the shrine of a rebel or a robber. One may "abhor the sin without hating the sinner," "loathe the priest yet love the stole." These subtle distinctions might not receive ready recognition from a Madison Square pugilist or an Alhambra ballet-girl, but tradition has taught them to the wrestler of Ekoin¹ and the *geisha* of Yanagibashi. If the government held up a finger, the pilgrimages to Nishino's grave would cease; if the Emperor made a gesture of dissent, the

¹ The name of a place in Tokyo where wrestling matches are held annually to determine the national champions.

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image of a rebellious subject would not be carried in triumphal procession past the palace gates. But the real significance of these demonstrations is not mistaken in Japan.

Greater than either the Sano festival or the Kanda festival is the *Gion-matsuri* in Kyoto, the greatest, indeed, of all such celebrations in Japan. Like the Tokyo *fêtes*, however, it consists essentially of a magnificent procession. The difference is in the nature of the objects of worship. Prominent among these is a glaive forged by the celebrated swordsmith Sanjo Munechika. It is supposed to be endowed with the virtue that once belonged to a king's touch in Europe: raised reverentially to the head, it cures the ague. This blessed blade has the honour of riding, a hundred feet high, on a resplendent *dashi*, at the head of a line of twenty-three cars bearing effigies of celebrated scholars, of Chinese philosophers, of the moon, of a mantis and of a "flower thief." Mencius rides side by side with a lass who pilfers blossoms, but is not insulted by the companionship, for nature alone suffers by the theft. A conspicuous object in the Gion



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DANCING GIRLS.

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procession is the chief *danseuse*, a girl of twelve or thirteen who dances on a dais in the centre of the glaive *dashi*. Nothing beautiful or costly that Kyoto can contribute is neglected in decking out this damsel for the *fête*. On either side of her another virgin postures in unison, but the little lady in the middle is the goddess of the hour, the queen of the summer festival. Her reign does not end when the deities, the savants and the symbols have been re-consigned to their twelve months' seclusion in shrines and storehouses. It is then, indeed, that her triumph reached its acme, for a procession is formed all on her own account. At the head march five *Samurai*, in the old-time uniform of their rank; then comes a glaivesman; then two bearers of gorgeously lacquered boxes, containing the wardrobes of the little dame; then her palanquin, glowing with bright colours and sparkling ornaments, carried by four lads in correspondingly rich costume, and flanked by the chief local officials as well as by the two companion virgins, objects almost as brilliant as the queen herself. Over the palanquin is carried a monster um-

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brella with handle and ribs of rose-red lacquer, cherry blossoms and the ideograph for longevity blazoned on its surface, and a tasselled bag of brocade containing a Gion amulet suspended under its shelter. Two more wardrobe bearers follow, and porters of umbrellas in baskets and of gold-lacquered luncheon boxes bring up the rear. At the portals of the temple of Gion, a draught of holy wine (*miki*) and a "blessed amulet" (*shimpu*) are given to the virgin, whereupon she ceases to be a mere "young thing" (*chigo*) and becomes a "sacred child" (*suiiko*). The tediousness of these details will serve, perhaps, to convey to the reader some faint idea of the elaborate code of conventionalities that has to be consulted at each point of such ceremonials. Everything is provided for by tradition; and every proviso must be observed.

If these huge metropolitan festivals show the general attitude of the national mind toward supernatural subjects, the smaller celebrations afford a still more accurate insight into the superstitions and daily ambitions of the people. Some time in the middle ages, a great eagle made its appearance

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at Ajiki in the province of Shimosa, which lies on the eastern shores of Edo (Tokyo) Bay. The eagle, of course, typifies everything that is majestically aggressive and tenaciously acquisitive. It thus becomes to the Japanese a symbol of good fortune. The Shimosa people built a shrine in honour of their visitor and covered the walls with votive tablets, depicting an eagle bestrid by a man in official robes — “a commoner rising to rank and office by the aid of wings that soar and talons that capture.” By and by the capital of the Tokugawa grew so big that it drew to itself whatever was notable in the neighbouring provinces. The eagle’s shrine found its way to the suburbs of the metropolis, in the Shitaya district, within sight of the Paphian quarter, and became a place of pilgrimage for every one craving the gifts of fortune — for the wrestler, the courtesan, the actor, the dancing girl, the jester, the *raconteur*, the musician, the tradesman and the apprentice. Nothing that can be called a ceremony is associated with the eagle’s *fête*, the *Tori-no Machi* (abbreviation of *matsuri*), or worship of the bird, as the people call it. Only on the “bird days” in November, per-

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haps two days, perhaps three if the calendar is kind, tens of thousands of people flock out to this shrine among the rice fields, and, after a brief act of worship, purchase harbingers of luck in the shape of big rakes, parent potatoes, millet dumplings and bamboo tea-whisks. Stalls for the sale of these homely articles occupy all available spaces within the temple enclosure and along the avenues leading to the gate, and as the etiquette of the eagle requires that there shall be no bargaining — when did the great bird stop to discuss the preliminaries of a capture? — the hucksters drive a roaring trade, especially at the close of the day when their wares are nearly sold out and belated worshippers see a risk of returning empty-handed. The rake, as part of the paraphernalia of a pursuer of gain, explains itself. But there is a strange feature about these eagle rakes. Their teeth are said to be made from the wood of coffins. At cremations, if economy has to be practised, the corpse is removed from its casket and exposed to the direct action of the flames. The casket then becomes the property of the crematory and is purchased by the rake-makers. There is no

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explanation of such a singular custom, nor any evidence that it is observed on principle. The parent potato typifies humble ambition. Buried under ground and growing in oblivion, it is at all events the head of a family. "Better be the comb of a cock than the tail of an ox." Millet dumplings are associated with the orthodox group of lucky articles by a play upon words. To "clutch millet with wet hands" is a popular metaphor for greed. *Mochi*, which signifies a dumpling, signifies also "to hold." Thus "millet dumpling" becomes a metaphor for grasping largely and holding firmly. The strength of the people's faith in these pilgrimages, prayers and purchases is evidenced by the crowd that the city pours out to the *Tori-no Machi* every fall, and by the eager happiness of the worshippers' mien. But if any members of the upper classes go it is only to look and to laugh.

In the festivals of which we have thus far spoken there is nothing that suggests any affinity between the religious rites of Japan and those of ancient Europe. But we now reach a point of marked similarity. Just as the fire of Hestia was kept perpetually burning in the Grecian prytaneum two

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thousand years ago, so at the national shrines in Izumo and Ise there are stone lanterns in which the flame is said to have glowed uninterruptedly since the age of the gods. If that be so, it is a flame twenty-five centuries old. The origin of the fire-guarding cult is now so well understood, and its practice has been traced to so many races, that to find it in Japan also is neither surprising nor specially significant. But, as might have been anticipated, some of the rites connected with it reflect the peculiar genius of the Japanese. In Kyoto on the last evening of the year, when the street leading to the temple of Gion is converted into a market for the sale of New Year's decorations, and is crowded with people of all degrees, men go about carrying short hempen ropes with one end burning. These they swing around their heads, and it is the privilege of any person struck by a rope to revile the bearer without stint. The Japanese language is not furnished with curses after the pattern of Occidental blasphemies, but it lends itself to the construction of very pregnant invective, and no one that has waited in Gion-machi to see the death of the old year, can labour

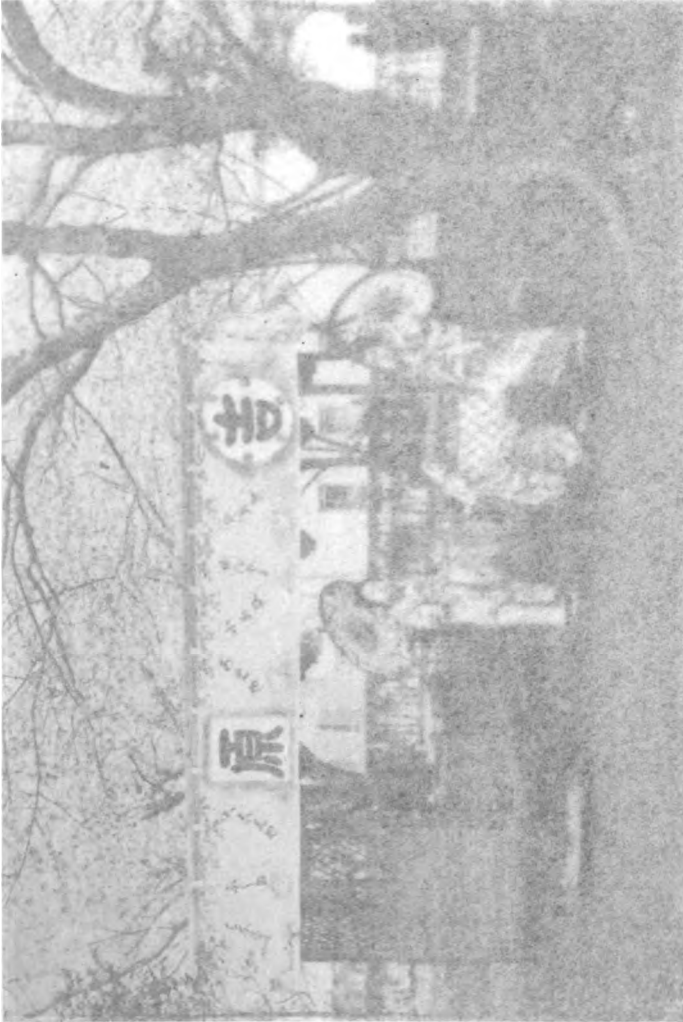
FESTIVALS

under any doubt of the Kyoto people's capacity for objurgation. But it is all perfectly good-humoured ; a mutual measuring of abusive vocabularies. Meanwhile, a big bonfire burns within the precincts of the shrine. It has been kindled from a year-old flame tended in a lamp hanging under the eaves of the sacred building, and people come there to light a taper which, burning before the household altar, shall be the beacon of domestic prosperity. As the night wears on, the crowds gradually flow into the temple grounds, and there, at the "hour of the tiger" (2 A. M.) the "Festival of the Pine Shavings" takes place. A *Shinto* priest reads a ritual. His colleagues obtain a spark by the friction of two pieces of wood, and set fire to a quantity of shavings packed into a large iron lamp. These charred fragments of pine wood the worshippers receive, and carry away as amulets to protect their possessors against plague and pestilence.

In provincial districts the religious festival sometimes presents very quaint features. On the first "day of the horse" in the month of April, there is performed, at the *Tsukuma Matsuri* in Omi province, a manner of worship

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intended to promote wifely fidelity. Wives and widows are marshalled in procession, each carrying upon her head as many earthenware pots as she has had husbands. A woman's glory in Japan is to marry once, and if her husband dies, to remain always faithful to his memory. It must be confessed that among the lower orders the ideal is seldom attained. Marriage, not being preceded in their case by courtship or by any opportunity of ascertaining mutual compatibility of disposition, is often followed by separation. Upon the woman rests the responsibility for such accidents, since the theory of conjugal life is that the wife must adapt herself to the husband, not the husband to the wife. Thus to have been divorced frequently, while it does not by any means imply marital infidelity, is held to indicate some want of self-abnegation or moral pliability on the woman's part. It might be supposed that the Omi dames would shirk the obligation of parading their conjugal records in public. But a belief that the goddess whom they worship will punish insincerity, prompts them to carry their proper tale of pots without



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LUNCH STAND IN A PUBLIC PARK.

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scanting the number. There is, indeed, a tradition that a certain crafty woman once had recourse to the device of hiding in a big pot that represented her last husband, several little pots that represented his predecessors. But judgment overtook her. She stumbled as she walked in the procession, and the big pot falling from her head, displayed its contents to public gaze, and to her lasting shame.

An even stranger celebration takes place on the first "day of the hare" in the tenth month, at Wasa, in the province of Kishu. It is called the "laughing festival of Wasa" (*Wasa no Warai-matsuri*). There is a belief that in the tenth month of every year all the deities repair to the great shrine of Izumo, and there hold a conclave for the purpose of arranging the nuptial affairs of the nation. The month is called the "godless moon" (*Kami-na-zuki*) for all parts of the country except Izumo, whereas, on the contrary, it is distinguished as the "moon of the gods' presence" (*Kami-ari-zuki*) by the inhabitants of Izumo. The legend has lost much of its old force, but it still commands the venerable

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faith of conservative rustics, and many a farmer in Izumo carefully locks the door of his dwelling at sunset and refrains from venturing abroad before dawn during the period of the deities' assembly at Ise. It happened that when this divine parliament was first convened, one ill-starred deity, Miwa Daimyo-jin, mistook the date or otherwise mismanaged affairs so that the debate had terminated before he reached Ise. The laughing festival is intended to commemorate that accident. Instead of sympathising with the belated god, the people assemble to laugh at him, as the other deities are supposed to have laughed when he presented himself to take part in a finished discussion. The fashion of the festival is as quaint as its conception. All the oldest men in the district and all the children come together and form a procession for marching to the shrine. The elders head the array, carrying two boxes of fixed capacity, filled with persimmons and oranges spitted on bamboo rods. The children follow, grouped round a *go-hei* and holding in their hands oranges and persimmons similarly spitted. These prelimi-

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naries as well as the progress to the shrine are conducted with the utmost solemnity. Arrived at the shrine, the greyest among the elders turns about to face the little ones and orders them to laugh. There is never any failure to obey, and from the children the contagion spreads to the adult population until the whole district ripples with merriment from morning till evening. It is a graceful notion that the deities desire the people to share their mirth as well as to pray for their tutelage.

Several provincial festivals have gradually assumed the character of athletic competitions. At the top of a mountain called Kimpo-zan, in Ugo province, stands the shrine of *Ha-ushi-wake*. On the 5th day of the first month, all the robust men of the district, to the number of several thousands, ascend the mountain and pass the night in a snow-cave some two furlongs from the summit. At that season the snow lies ten feet deep on Kimpo-zan. To reach the cave is in itself an arduous undertaking. When the first streak of dawn is seen in the sky, the youngest and strongest of the band of wor-

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shippers start from the cave. Stripped to their loin-cloths, they race in frenzied emulation over the snow and up the steep cliffs, the first to reach the shrine being assured of the deity's protection throughout the year and of his comrades' profound admiration. This race does not end the *fête*. All the competitors crowd into the precincts of the shrine and engage in a bout of general wrestling. They do not attempt to hurl each other to the ground after the manner of Western wrestlers, but only to thrust one another from the enclosure. By degrees the remaining occupants of the cave join the *mêlée*, the rule observed by each newcomer being to aid the weak and beat back the strong. It may be imagined that from a mad contest in which four or five thousand strong men engage, struggling desperately in the snow and among the rocks on the summit of a lofty mountain in midwinter, many must emerge with serious injuries. But tradition affirms that no one has ever been known to receive a disabling hurt. The deity, they say, protects his devotees. The truth is that in competitions of such a nature

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the Japanese maintain from first to last the most imperturbable good-humour. Any one losing his temper would be ridiculed for months. After the wrestling is over and when each man has given stalwart proof of the earnestness of his faith, they all join in one band and march down the mountain singing.

At Ono-machi in Bingo the people worship Susa-no-o, the rough deity, whose unruly conduct terrified his sister, the sun goddess, so much that she retired into a cave. The festival in honour of the god takes place in the sixth month and is of such a nature as "the impetuous male deity" himself might be supposed to organise if he gave any thought to the question. There is no stately procession, no display of gorgeous *dashi*, no dancing of brilliantly robed damsels. The whole affair consists of a tumultuous trial of speed and strength. Bands of strong men seize the sacred cars, race with them to the sea, and, having plunged in breast deep, their burden held aloft, dash back at full speed to the shrine. There refreshments, wine, fish and a box of rice, are served out, and then again the race is re-

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sumed, the goal being the central flag (*nobori*) among a number set up in a large plain. To this contest the bearers of the cars devote themselves with as much zeal as though they were fighting for their lives. Hundreds run beside each car ready to replace any bearer that is thrown down or exhausted; their feet beat time to a wildly shouted chorus, and as they sweep along, apparently unconscious of everything but their goal, and wholly reckless of obstacles or collisions, it seems incredible that fatal accidents should not occur again and again. Yet, no sooner is the struggle ended, than these men who, a moment before, appeared ready to trample upon each other's corpses, may be seen seated in tea houses, chatting, laughing, circulating the wine cup and behaving as if such an incident as a desperate struggle for the favour of the deity had never interrupted the even tenor of their placid existences.

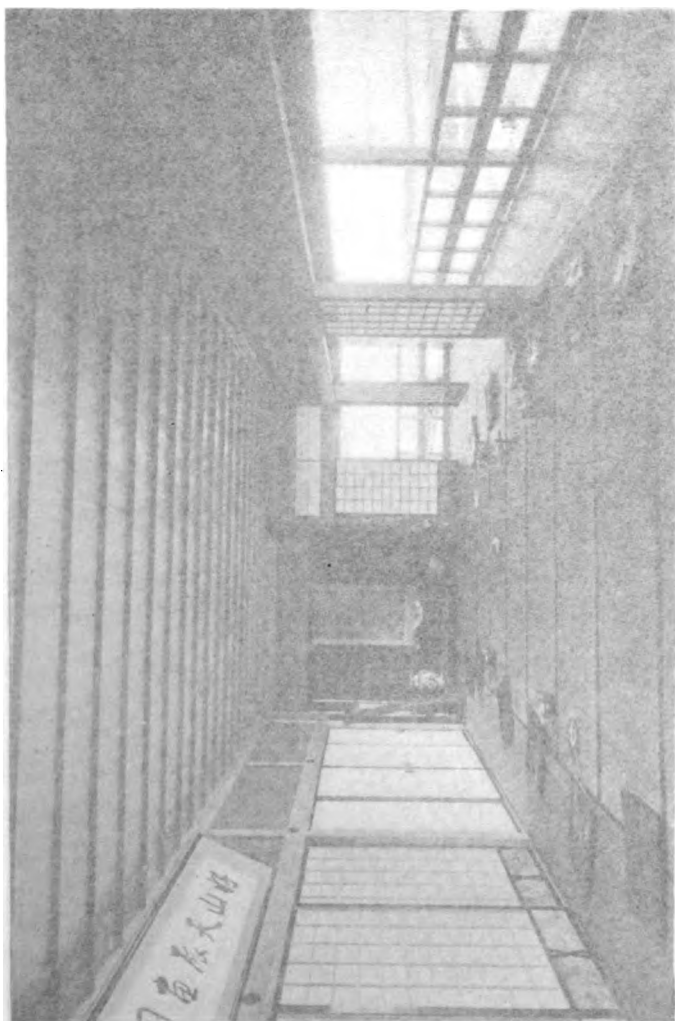
At other *fêtes* the worshippers seek to gain possession of some sacred object supposed to insure exceptional good fortune to the holder. Five hundred years ago, a merchant's apprentice

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walking by the seaside near Hakozaki in Chikuzen, found two perfectly spherical balls of wood which had been cast upon the shore by the waves. The shrine of the "god of war" (*Hachiman*) at Hakozaki is celebrated in Japanese history. Supplications offered there at the time when the great Mongol armada swept down upon Japan in the thirteenth century, are supposed to have produced the storm that shattered the enemy's fleet and strewed the coast of Kyūshū with his dead. It is a place of miracles. A crystal ball is one of the three sacred insignia of Japan. It also symbolises the pearl of great price held in the claws of the sea god's dragon. Hence, two perfect spheres of finely grained wood cast upon the beach at Hakozaki necessarily suggested supernatural agency. Their finder carried them to the Hakozaki shrine and reverentially intrusted them to the custody of the priests, having first washed them carefully in holy water taken from the granite cistern at the adjacent fane of Ebisu. From that time the young apprentice seemed to become the favourite of fortune. Ebisu, the jovial-faced fisher deity, who provides for men's

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daily sustenance, had evidently taken the youth under his protection. Whenever the third day of the first month came round — the anniversary of the finding of the balls — the apprentice, soon a thriving merchant, did not fail to repair to the temple. Taking the sacred spheres thence, he would carry them to the shrine of Ebisu, wash them in the holy water, anoint them with clove-oil and bear them back to their place in the temple. When and how this custom was elevated to the rank of a religious rite, there is no record, but within less than a century and a half from the finding of the balls, a “jewel-grasping festival” came to be celebrated at Hakoziaki on the third day of every first month. It took the form of a gigantic scramble. The priests, having carried the ball — now, by some unexplained process, transformed into a single sphere of hard stone — to the shrine of Ebisu, and having washed it and read a ritual, delivered it to the crowd of worshippers for conveyance to the temple of Hachiman. Whatever hands held it at the moment of final transfer to the temple were the hands of a person destined to



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was once solemnly taken the youth under his protection. Whenever the third day of the first month came round—the anniversary of the taking of the balls—the apprentice, such as he was, a peasant, did not fail to repair to the temple. Taking the sacred spheres thence, he carried them to the shrine of Ebisu, washed them in the holy water, anointed them with ointment, and bore them back to their place in the temple. When and how this custom was elevated to the rank of a religious rite, there is no record, but within less than a century and a half from the finding of the balls, a “jewel-grasping festival” came to be celebrated at Hekozaki on the third day of every first month. It took the form of a gigantic scramble. The priests, having carried the ball—now, by some unexplained process, transformed into a single sphere of hard stone—to the shrine of Ebisu, and having washed it and read a ritual, delivered it to the crowd of worshippers for conveyance to the temple of Hachiman. Whoever hands held it at the moment of final transfer to the temple were the lands of a person destined to



TEA HOUSE "EBISUYA," ENOSHIMA.

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high fortune. Not the province of Chikuzen alone, but all the northern districts of Kyūshū and the regions on the opposite coast of the Inland Sea, sent their strong men to take part in the struggle. The distance between the fane of Ebisu and the temple of Hachiman is only a few yards, yet hours were spent in the passage of the "jewel" from one place to the other. Naked, except for a loin-cloth, thousands of men struggled in the narrow enclosure until sheer exhaustion gradually thinned their ranks and left space for the most enduring to win a path, inch by inch, to the temple.

Almost the same description applies to a much more celebrated *fête* held within the precincts of the temple of Kwannon, the goddess of mercy, at Saidai-ji in Bizen province, on the fourteenth day of the first month. There the scramble is for pieces of wood thrown by the priests to a multitude of devotees. No supernatural tradition attaches to these amulets. They have their origin in a simple exercise of benevolence. In the middle era of the temple's existence (the beginning of the sixteenth century), the priests made a practice of

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presenting gifts to such of their parishioners as had shown special zeal during the New Year's devotional exercises, which lasted from the first to the fourteenth of the first month. By degrees the number of worshippers eligible for such distinction grew so large that some method of special selection became necessary, and recourse was had to lots. The exciting element of chance thus introduced helped, of course, to swell the concourse of devotees, and finally a clever abbot, probably borrowing the idea from the "jewel-grasping festival" of Hakoziaki, devised the plan of leaving the people to settle their own eligibility by an athletic contest. The little town lying at the temple's feet contains only two thousand inhabitants in ordinary times, but at the festival season the population grows to fifty or sixty thousand, and a moralist might find food for reflection in the fact that the services of steamships and railways are borrowed to convey this stream of worshippers and sightseers to an observance so suggestive of the rudest ages. At ten o'clock on the night of the fourteenth of the first month (8th of February according to the present calendar), the Saidai-ji drum beats the sig-

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nal, and the first band of intending competitors run at full speed through the temple ground, plunge into the river below, and having thus purified themselves, return to the sacred enclosure by a different route. A second time the drum sounds at midnight, and fresh crowds of combatants pour through the temple grounds. In truth, from the first tap of the drum until its final note is heard at two o'clock in the morning, streams of stalwart men never cease to surge between the temple and the river, their feet beating time to a chorus of *esa, esa*, the echoes of which can be heard on the opposite coast, twenty-five miles distant, "like the roar of surf breaking on rocks." Exactly at two o'clock the "divine wood" (*shingi*), a little cylinder of fresh pine, specially marked, is thrown from the temple window to the surging crowd, and a fierce struggle commences for its possession. One prize for some ten thousand competitors would be too meagre an arrangement. The *shingi* is therefore accompanied by hundreds of similar but smaller tokens (*kushigo*), which insure fertility to farm lands where they are set up, and health to the farmer's family. But the *shingi* itself is the great

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prize. The competition for its possession is not confined to the actual combatants. Wealthy households also vie with one another to obtain it, each setting out in the vestibule a box of fresh sand whither the divine wood must be carried before the contest is considered at an end. Thus the struggle extends to the streets of the town itself, and long after the *shingi's* fate has been decided, the army of naked men wrestle and shout within the temple enclosure, the breath of the wild struggle hanging over them like a cloud in the frosty moonlight.

It is easy to see that the upper classes take no active part in celebrations such as those described above. The religious festival in Japan owes its vitality to superstitions prevalent among the middle and lower orders only.

XV

OBSERVANCES AND PASTIMES



EVERY FAMILY HAS RULES and methods of its own which it follows with regularity directly proportionate to its age. The members of a household newly franked with the stamp of gentility look abroad for models of fashion and deportment, but the members of a household that has enjoyed pride of place through immemorial generations enact their own canons, and obey them with scrupulosity that grows with obedience. For two thousand years, more or less, the Japanese nation lived the life of an independent and virtually secluded family, borrowing largely, indeed, from the conventions and precedents of its over-sea neighbours, but impressing upon everything foreign the mark of home genius, so that, though the metal remained alien, the coins struck from it bore domestic

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images and superscriptions. Little by little, the doings of the day, the etiquette of the season, the observances of the month and the celebrations of the year were coded by custom and promulgated by practice, until the people finally found themselves subjects of a system of conventionalities, pleasant, graceful and refined, but inflexible. Nowhere else can we see grooves of routine beaten so deeply by the tread of centuries; nowhere else does the light of old times, the *veteris vestigia flammæ*, shine so steadily on the paths of usage. These customs may be examined one by one, and taken thus independently they present generally very pretty and often very quaint studies. But to appreciate their relation to the life of the nation, we must briefly follow the nation in its observance of them from New Year's day to New Year's eve.

According to the calendar of old Japan, the commencement of the year varied from what Western folks call the 16th of January to the 19th of February, but, on the average, it may be said to have fallen a full month later than the day fixed by the Gregorian method of reck-

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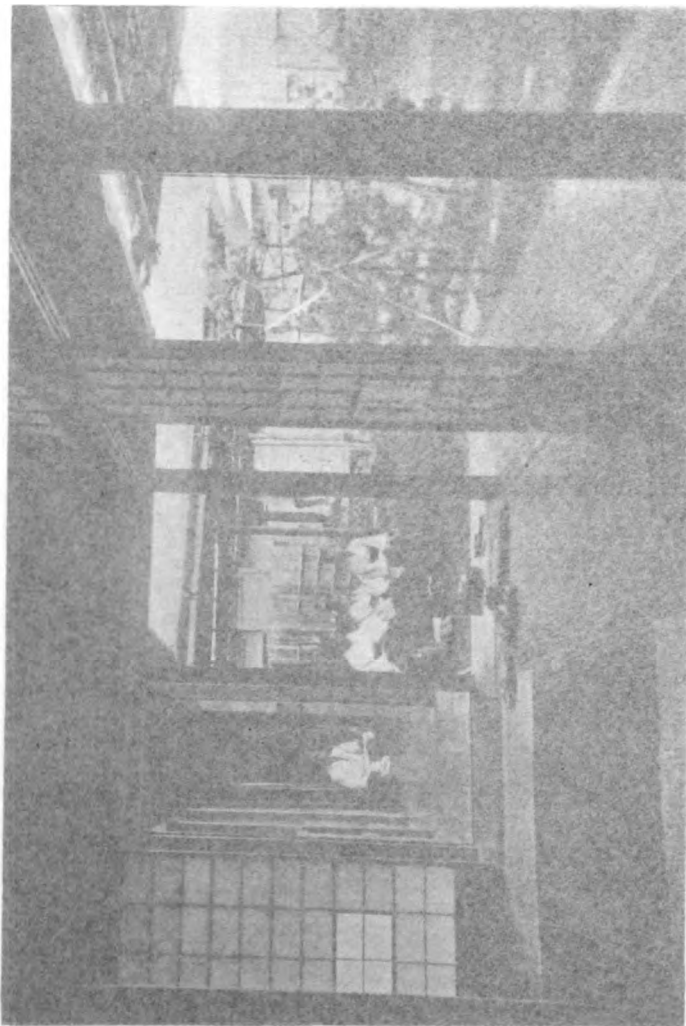
oning. It was thus associated with an idea of spring foreign to the corresponding season in Europe and America. In fact, the first fortnight of the first month was called "spring advent" (*ris-shun*), the second fortnight, the "rains" (*u-sui*). That old idea still clings to the time even under the altered conditions of the new calendar, and people still persuade themselves that spring has dawned when the first January sun rises, though neither the plum nor the snowparting plant (*yuki-wari-so*) — each a harbinger of spring in Japan — is within a month of opening its buds. To see the New Year in is considered a wholesome custom, but it involves something more than it does in the West, for, after greeting the stranger, folks remain up to welcome him. Let a man's enthusiasm be ever so defective, he is expected to rise at the hour of the tiger (4 A. M.), wash his feet and hands and don new clothes to meet the auspicious morn. Then, with his gala garments in due order, he worships the celestial and terrestrial deities, performs obeisance to the spirits of his ancestors, offers congratulations to parents

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and elders, and finally sits down to breakfast. No ordinary viands are consumed. The tea must be made with "young water" (*waka-mizu*), drawn from the well as the first ray of the New Year's sun strikes it. The *pièce de résistance* (*zōni*) is a species of *pot pourri*, made from six components,¹ invariably present though in varying proportions, and it is absolutely essential that every one desiring to be hale and hearty throughout the opening twelve months should quaff a measure of special *saké* from a red-lacquer cup.² Each householder, from the highest to the humblest, is careful to prepare and set out an "elysian stand," or red-lacquer tray, covered with leaves of the evergreen

¹ Rice cake (*mochi*), Japanese turnip (*daikon*), potatoes (*imo*), a species of seaweed (*kombu*), haliotis (*awabi*), a burdock (*gobo*).

² This *saké* is called *tosu*, though the term is properly limited to the spices themselves. The custom came from China, where it existed certainly as far back as the third century before Christ. It is said to have originated with an old hermit who distributed among the villagers packets of physic, directing that the packet be let down by a string into the well, taken up again on New Year's day and placed in a tub of *saké*, a draught of which would prove a preservative against every kind of disease. The practice was introduced into Japan at the beginning of the ninth century, and etiquette soon elaborated the ceremonial by prescribing a special kind of *saké* for each of the first three days of the year — *tosu*, *biyakusan* and *toshosan*. It is *de rigueur* that the youngest of a party should be the first to drink the spiced *saké*. As for the spices, they are chiefly carminatives.

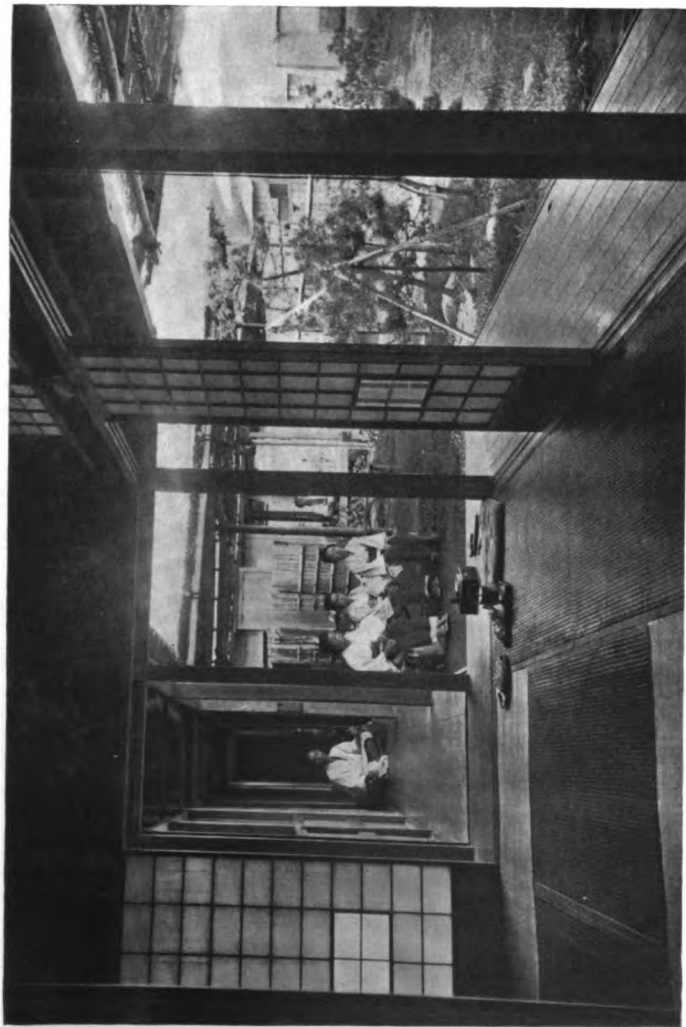


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A JAPANESE INTERIOR.

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yuzuriha, and supporting a rice dumpling, a lobster, oranges, persimmons, chestnuts, dried sardines and herring roe. This stand and its contents have allegorical signification. Ancient Chinese legends speak of three islands in some remote ocean where youth is everlasting, where birds and animals are all pure white, and where the mountains and palaces are built of gold and silver. The "elysian stand" (*hōrai-dai*) represents the principal of these three islands (*Hōrai-jima*), and the viands piled upon it are either homonymous with words expressing perpetuity and longevity, or present some feature suggesting long life and prosperity. Thus the leaves spread upon the stand are from the shrub *yuzuriha*, and on them repose bitter oranges called *daidai*. But in ordinary colloquial, *daidai yuzuri* signifies to "bequeath from generation to generation." The kernels of chestnuts, dried and crushed, are called *kachi-guri*, and *kachi* also signifies "victory." The lobster (*ebi*) with its curved back and long tentacles is typical of life so prolonged that the back becomes bent and the beard grows to the waist. The seaweed,

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kombu, suggests *yorakobu*, or *yorokombu*, to "re-
joice." Sardines are set out because the little
fish swim never singly but always in pairs,
suggesting conjugal fidelity; herring roe, be-
cause of all the sea's inhabitants the herring is
supposed to be the most prolific; dried persim-
mons, because of the fruit's medicinal qualities;
and rice cake, otherwise called "mirror dump-
ling" (*kagami-mochi*), because, in the first place,
its shape and name refer to the "sacred mirror"
of the *Shinto* paraphernalia, and, in the second,
when cut up for consumption it is known as
ha-gatame, or "teeth strengthener," a word hav-
ing the same sound as "debility restorer." Thus
this assemblage of edibles constitutes a feast of
fortune. Originally the elysian stand was set
before guests coming to pay New Year's calls,
who partook of the comestibles placed upon it.
But subsequently it became a mere article of
furniture, a part of the decorations of the season.
These decorations, spoken of collectively as *kado-*
matsu, or "pine of the doorway," consist pri-
marily of pine and bamboo saplings planted at
either side of the vestibule and having a rope of

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rice straw (*shime-nawa*) suspended across or festooned from the boughs. History says that the fashion of the pines dates from the beginning of the tenth century; that the bamboo was added five hundred years later, and that the straw rope preceded both by an unknown interval. No religious significance attaches to the pine or the bamboo; they simply typify evergreen longevity. But the rope recalls the central event in the Japanese cosmogony, when the sun goddess having been enticed from her cavern, a barrier was stretched across the entrance to prevent her from retreating thither again. Wherever the rope hangs, the sweet fresh breath of spring is supposed to penetrate. This, then, is the most prominent element of the decorations: it is suspended not only at the entrance of the house, but also beside the well, before the bathroom, across the sacred shelf and in the inner court. At the central point of the rope a lobster with some fern fronds and *yuzuriha* leaves is usually tied, the fronds and leaves serving, in this instance, to suggest hardy verdure. A piece of charcoal is added to the assembly, tradition as-

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signing to it the power of warding off evil influences.

Theoretically no work of any kind should be done on New Year's day. Even the usual business of sweeping the house is forbidden, lest some element of the "male principle" should be inadvertently removed with the rubbish. But this idleness is merely nominal, for there devolves upon every one the inevitable duty of paying congratulatory visits to friends and relatives; a duty which is gradually losing many of its old-time graces, and assuming the character of a *corvée*. From the tiniest child to the most ancient grandfather each dons the best and newest garments that the family wardrobe can furnish, and while the grown-up folk make their round of calls, lads, lasses and children devote themselves to appropriate pastimes. The visits paid by the small fry of society to the great fish involve nothing more than the inscription of one's name in a book or the deposit of one's card in a basket. It is impossible to conceive anything colder and more conventional. Often even the formality of a servant to receive the

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names of the callers is dispensed with: the visitor finds an untenanted vestibule, a receptacle for cards and a name-book. But where friendship is concerned, and among the middle and lower classes generally, the call assumes a more genuine and genial character. The visitor carries with him, or is preceded by, a present of some kind, a "year jewel" (*toshidama*), usually trifling in value — as a basket of oranges, a fan, a bundle of dried seaweed (*hoshi-nori*), a towel, a parcel of paper, a salted salmon or a box of sweetmeats — but always wrapped up with scrupulous neatness, and encircled by a cord with strands of red and gold, or red and white, the ends joined in a "butterfly knot," under which is thrust a bit of haliotis looking out from a quiver-shaped envelope. Black is the ill-omened hue among colours in Japan; red stands at the opposite end of the category, and red and gold constitute the richest combination, red and white being next in order of auspiciousness. The bit of dried haliotis has a double meaning: it suggests not only singleness of affection, supposed to be typified by the mollusk's single shell, but also

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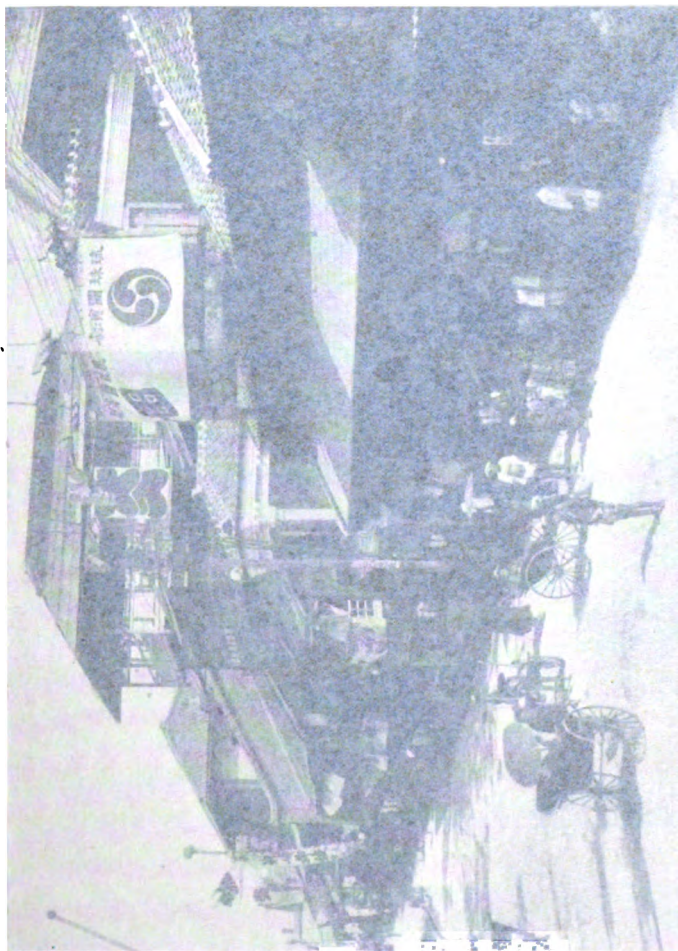
durability of love and longevity, since the dried haliotis is capable of being stretched to an extraordinary length. This elaboration of details extends to the formulæ of greeting. The curt phrases current in the Occident are replaced by sentences that centuries of use have polished and crystallised: "I respectfully tender rejoicings at the opening season;" "I thank you for the many acts of kindness shown to me in the old year, and trust that there will be no change in the new;" "On the contrary, it is I who have to be grateful for your services, and to beg for their continuance;" "I am ashamed to offer such an exceedingly insignificant object, but I entreat that you will do me the honour of accepting it as a mere token;" "I am overwhelmed to find that you have come to me when I should have hastened to wait upon you;" and so forth and so on, each sentence punctuated with profound bows and polite inspirations. Meanwhile, the streets are converted into playgrounds. Business is entirely limited to the sale or purchase of "treasure-ships" (*takarabune*), a favourite toy typical of good fortune, sweet *saké* and bean

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jelly (*yokan*), carried about by hucksters whose musical cries enhance the general festivity. The shops are not shut, but ingress is denied by means of bamboo blinds hanging underneath tablets which bear the name of the householder, and are fastened in place with cords of red and white. There is a sound of laughter everywhere, for all the young people turn out in bright costumes, and play battle-board (*hago-ita*) and shuttlecock, the penalty for dropping the shuttlecock being to receive, on a tender part of the body, a whack from the battle-boards of all the other players, or a smudge of ink on the face, each of which visitations evokes peals of mirth. The shuttlecock is a diminutive affair, flying swiftly and requiring to be struck true and full. Tradition ascribes to it originally the shape of a dragon-fly, and alleges that the game acts as a charm against the attacks of mosquitoes during the ensuing summer, the dragon-fly being a devourer of those insect pests. But that is a mere fantasy. The game of shuttlecock came to Japan from China. In the latter country it is a pastime for men; the heels of their shoes, soled

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with paper to a thickness of one or two inches, serve for battle-boards, and they kick with marvellous dexterity. Japan added a battle-board, and thus adapted the amusement to both sexes, while, at the same time, bringing its paraphernalia within the range of decorative art. For the battle-board gradually became an object of beauty. The idea of furnishing it with a catgut face or parchment back did not occur to its makers ; it remained essentially a thin flat board of white pine. But its reverse, lacquered at first in gold and colours, was finally covered with applied pictures (*oshie*), showing all the elaboration of detail that distinguishes a Parisian *poupée* of the most costly kind. The Japanese maiden loves and cherishes dolls at least as much as does her little sister of the West, but her battle-boards hold nearly the same rank in her affections, and if she is fortunate in the possession of rich parents and fond friends, the pillars of her playroom support galleries of battle-boards where you may see all the great personages of her country's history moulded in white *habutae* (a kind of silk), and tricked out in the



A TYPICAL SCENE

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gave the stress of one or two of the most beautiful, and they kept on their way. Japan added a battle-board, and completed the amusement to be enjoyed at the same time, bringing its paper pictures within the range of decorative art. The

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A TYPICAL STREET SCENE.

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resplendent robes of the palace or the glittering armour of the campaign. Battle-board and shuttlecock, though it engages the attention of girls of all ages, finds comparatively little favour with lads until they have reached the age when love of muscular sports begins to be supplemented by a sense of feminine graces. Kite-flying is the amusement of the boy proper. It is a curious fact, apparently inconsistent with experience in other directions, that while the kite occupies at least as large a space in the vista of Japanese as of Chinese childhood, and attracts a much greater share of adult attention in Japan than in China, the ingenious and fantastic shapes that the toy takes in the Middle Kingdom are not emulated in the Island Empire. The dragon, two or three fathoms long, that may be seen writhing over a Chinese village, each section of its body an independent aeroplane, becomes in Japan a single rectangular surface, generally lacking even the picturesque adjunct of a tail, and unornamented save that the figure of some renowned warrior is rudely caricatured on its face. This difference indicates

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simply that the Japanese boy prefers the practical to the fanciful. What he wants is, not a quaint monster undulating at a low elevation, but an object that shall soar as loftily and as perpendicularly as possible, and shall hang humming from the blue right overhead.

We digress at this point from the routine of our references in order to speak more fully of kites; for while they hold among Japanese pastimes a rank so prominent as to call for special description, the season for flying them varies in different localities, and it is consequently impossible to assign to them a set place in any calendar of sports. Little lads in every town and village make New Year's day the great epoch for this business, but adult kite-flyers choose other times. In Nagasaki, for example, which enjoys a lofty reputation for skill in such matters, the third month of the old almanac, that is to say, the balmy time of April or early May, is the season for the *shi-yen-kai* (paper-flying assembly), and on three days in that month—the 10th, the 15th and the 20th—all the world and his wife or light-o'-love flock out to one of three spots

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traditionally appropriated for the game. The kites vary in size from one to thirty-six square feet, but are uniformly rectangular in shape, their ribs made of seasoned bamboo slightly convex to the wind, their paper coverings joined and spread so deftly that perfect equipoise is obtained, and their connection with the flying cord effected by a skein of filaments converging from innumerable points of their surface. The string, through a length of ten to a hundred yards, is covered with powdered glass, for the object of each kite company is to cut down all competitors. Its cord once severed, a kite becomes the property of any one save its original owner, and that inviolable law leads to the organisation of bands of kite-catchers, who mount into high trees, stand at points of vantage, or roam about, armed with long poles, lassos and other catching contrivances. It is understood that whenever several catchers lay hands simultaneously on a kite cut adrift, the person nearest to the severed end of the string shall be regarded as the possessor, and that, where distinction is difficult, the kite must be torn into fragments then and there. But despite these pre-

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cautions against dispute, fierce fights sometimes occur, and Nagasaki was once divided into two factions that threatened for a moment to destroy the town and each other in the sequel of a kite-flying picnic. Generally, however, the merriest good-humour prevails, and the vanquished return as serene as the victors, all equally undisturbed by the thought that the cost of the *shi-yen-kai* makes a large inroad into the yearly economies of the richest as well as the poorest. Tosa, the southern province of the island of Shikoku, is scarcely less celebrated than Nagasaki for the kite-flying propensities of its inhabitants. But there is no set season in Tosa. The birth of a boy, whether it occur in spring, summer or winter, is counted the appropriate time for a sport that typifies the soaring of ambition and the flight of genius. Humble households send up little kites to signalise these domestic events, but great families have recourse to the *furoshiki-dako*, a monster from twenty-four to thirty feet square, with a tail from a thousand to twelve hundred yards long. The tail, made of red and blue paper, or red and white, in alternate rolls, is

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coiled in a great open chest, from which the ascending kite draws it, and it is at this huge appendage that rival kites aim their flight. As the kite is pulled down from the clouds, the spectators struggle to possess themselves of the tail, which is generally torn into fragments in the scramble. A feast for all who have assisted to fly the kite terminates the ceremony. Vast, however, as are the dimensions of the *furoshiki-dako* of Tosa, the pride of place, so far as size is concerned, belongs to the "two-thousand-sheet kites" of Suruga and Tottomi provinces. A "sheet" refers to the form in which paper is ordinarily manufactured, namely, a rectangle measuring a foot by seven inches, approximately. Thus the superficies of a two-thousand-sheet kite, allowing for the joinings of the sheets, is from a thousand to eleven hundred square feet, or about the size of a carpet that would cover a room thirty-three feet square. Such a kite requires a sum of from five hundred to six hundred *yen* to construct it, a cable to fly it, a score of strong men to control it, and a special building to store it, the great hall in a temple

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being often utilised for this purpose. At the opposite extreme of the scale of kite-flying districts stand the provinces of Owari and Mikawa. There the smaller the kite, the more highly it is esteemed. Tiny representations of dragonflies, cicadas and bees are flown with gossamer silk wound on spindles of ivory or tortoise-shell.

It might be supposed that a visit to the temples to pray for good fortune during the new year would be considered an essential part of the day's duties by the pious section of the population; but although a few aged or particularly superstitious folk may be seen offering up a brief orison to the tutelary deity, they are the exception, not the rule. It is considered more fitting to assemble on some highland and join hands of reverence as the first sun of the year rises above the horizon. Another feature of New Year's day is a dance performed in the streets by strolling mummers who go about in pairs, *manzai* and *saizo*, fantastically apparelled. One carries a small hand drum, the other a fan, and they dance from door to door with a degree of vigour not usually displayed by saltatory

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artists in Japan. Girls of the Eta¹ class also go about wearing immense hats that almost completely hide their faces, and playing *samisen*. These are the *tori oi*, or bird-chasers. A Chinese superstition, transplanted to Japan, says that birds of ill omen hover in the air on New Year's day, and seek an opportunity to enter men's abodes. It is the duty of the *Eta* damsels to avert this calamity, and little paper parcels of *cash* handed out to them from house after house as they pass along, striking a few notes on the *samisen* here and a few notes there, show how conservatively respectful is the demeanour of even the modern Japanese towards these ancient beliefs.

As the first day of the month is one of complete abstention from all ordinary business, so the second marks the conventional resumption of trades, industries and occupations. The student looks into his books; the calligraphist uses his brush; the merchant opens his store; the mechanic takes out his tools; the sailor handles his ship; the painter mixes a colour; and

¹ A class of Japanese ranking even lower than the commoners.

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the wholesale dealer sends goods to the retailer. But all these doings are only pretty make-believes. No one thinks of working seriously. Even the *hatsuni*, the first distribution of merchandise, takes the form of a picturesque procession of hand-wagons gaily decorated and drawn by men in bright costumes. At the palace and in the residences of noblemen special dances are performed, and wherever a shrine stands in honour of the god of prosperity (*Dai-koku*), cakes of rice flour are offered moistened with warm water called "the warm water of prosperity." The third is regarded as the *fête* of the "three *Daishi*." Piously disposed people in Tokyo visit the Ueno temples and in Kyoto repair to Hiei-zan; but it must be confessed that the "mirror-opening" ceremony on the following day is observed with far more punctilio. It is on this day that the "mirror dump-lings" (*kagami-mochi*) which have hitherto stood on the "elysian table," and those that have been offered at the family altar (*kami-dana*), at the well and at the hearth, are cut up, fried with soy and eaten by every member of the house-



is to the retailer, who is usually very profitably making his money, and is working seriously. The first distribution of merchandise is in the form of a picturesque procession of gaily decorated and brightly costumed floats. At the head of the floats of noblemen special prayers are offered, and wherever a shrine of the god of prosperity (*Dai-ichibu*) is offered moistened with the warm water of the spring is regarded as the *jite* of the festival. Thrifty disposed people in the provinces, temples and in Kyoto are not so far apart. It must be confessed that the "spring" ceremony on the day of the festival is observed with far more panache. It is said that the "mirror dump-ster" which will have hitherto stood on a lonely hillside and those that have been offered at the family altar (*kami-dana*), at the shrine and at the hearth, are cut up, fried with soy and eaten by every member of the house-
hold.



GEISHA PLAYING SAMISEN.

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hold, though in truth the dish derives its relish rather from the season than from its own savour. At dusk on the sixth and at dawn on the seventh, a curious combination of cooking and incantation takes place. It is called "the chopping of the seven herbs." From the Nara epoch—that is to say, from the eighth century—it became customary that the Emperor, attended by the Court nobles, should make an expedition to the hills on the "first day of the rat," in the first month, for the purpose of rooting up pine saplings and carrying them back to plant in the palace park. His Majesty thus brought home longevity, of which the pine had always been symbolical. At the same time, the leaves of spring plants were plucked, so that green youth might accompany length of years. It would be futile to attempt any description of the stately graces and elaborate ceremonial with which the Japanese can invest these acts in themselves so primitive. The transplanting of a baby pine, the gathering of a few tender leaves, are purposes so essentially paltry that to prelude them by sumptuous preparations and accompany them

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by solemn rites seems a grotesque solecism. But the most trivial aim derives dignity from the earnestness with which it is pursued, and the Japanese can be just as much in earnest about the lightest fancy as about the weightiest fact. They know how to be picturesquely great in small things, and if the faculty is crushed hereafter by collision with the hard realities of Western civilisation, the artistic world will be so much the poorer. During the first century of this pine-transplanting observance, its leaf-plucking adjunct was simply symbolical, but from the time of the Emperor Saga (813 A. D.) the practical precepts of Chinese traditions were adopted, and the leaves came to serve as seasoning for soup. Seven kinds had to be selected by those who aimed at strict orthodoxy, but common folks contented themselves with two. These they placed on a block, and with a large knife in each hand, chopped rhythmically to the seven-syllabled refrain:—

Toto no tori no
Nihon no tochi ni
Wataranu mae ni
Suto suto ton ton ton.

Birds of ill-hap pass us by,
Never here from China fly,
Flit and hop, flitting, hopping;
Chip a chop, chipping, chopping.

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Here once more appear the birds of ill omen which we have seen the ample-hatted *Eta* maiden driving away with *samisen* strains on New Year's day. Their connection with the preparation of the "seven-herb" soup is an affair of sound, not sense. The Chinese were wont to rap on the doors of their houses for the purpose of scaring away these invisible visitors, and the Japanese have converted that profoundly sensible custom into a chorus which they chant to the accompaniment of the chopping knives, making a merry pastime out of even this primevally simple performance.

From the 8th day of the month business is resumed, and on the 11th men of war make offerings of mirror dumplings to their armour, and practise archery, using a target big enough to avert the misfortune of opening the year with a bad record. On the 14th, the decorations of pine, bamboo and rope are removed and burned together, but in their place willow wands finely split into flower-like forms (*kezurihana*) are fixed to the eaves. Sometimes a bamboo basket is fixed on the roof to drive away demons. The cremation of the pine saplings and their companions is intended to drive away the

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mountain demons, who hate the crackle and sputter of fire, and to invite the cheerful principle while expelling the sad. The 15th is distinguished as the "chief-origin" day, and tradition requires that bean (*azuki*) broth should be eaten in every household, the bean being fatal to evil spirits. This day, too, and the 16th are servants' holidays. Men servants and women servants are allowed to visit their homes, a proceeding politely designated "the return of the rustics" (*yabui*). The New Year's ceremonials are now nominally at an end. Indeed, they may be said to have terminated with the burning of the decorations. But there remains one observance never forgotten or curtailed. It belongs to the 20th, is called "the first face," and consists in offerings of rice dumplings (*mochi*) by the fair sex to their toilet mirrors, just as on the 11th the *Samurai* makes a similar offering to his armour. While maids and matrons pay this vicarious homage to their own charms, merchants worship the deities of prosperity, Ebisu and Daikoku, the main feature of their worship being a display of profuse hospitality to friends and relatives: a veritable house-warming.

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It will be observed that the gods do not play a very prominent part in Japan's New Year observances. People do not turn their feet to the temples, nor do the priests deliver sermons to large audiences. At the close of the month (24th and 25th), however, there is a faint revival of religious sentiment. The shrines of Yemma, the deity of Hades, are visited, and the more superstitious carry with them little wooden carvings of the bullfinch which they have carefully kept during the old year, and which they now exchange at the shrines for new effigies, thus divesting themselves of the burden of their sins of deceit during the past twelvemonth, and receiving a token of renewed sincerity and renewed expiation throughout the opening year. This is another example of those quaint plays upon words probably inevitable among people speaking a language like that of the Japanese. The name of the bullfinch (*uso*) is homonymous with the term "falsehood." Thus the idea of the worshipper is to hide in his sleeve — for the effigy of the bullfinch is thus carried — all the fibs and falsehoods of which he has been guilty throughout the old year, and to avert their evil results.

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But the singular fact is that he carries home from the shrine a new symbol of deception. He makes naïve admission that life cannot be lived without lying, whereby he thus avoids at least the lie of pretending to think that it can.¹ It must not be supposed, however, that his fresh bullfinch confers prospective absolution from the guilt of guile. No such idea is acknowledged, though it is easy to perceive that a mechanical device for periodically evading the consequences of deceit cannot fail to create a false conscience towards the fault.

Every year of the "ten-stem cycle," on which the almanac of old Japan was based, has a special point of the compass from which fortunate influences are supposed to emanate. The god controlling those influences is called the "Year-luck Deity" (*Toshi-toku-jin*), and throughout the first

¹ The festival of *Uso-kai* had its origin in Chikuzen province. There, beginning at a date no longer ascertainable, pious people inaugurated the custom of visiting the temple of Temman at the hour of the bird on the night of the 7th of January, and offering effigies of the *uso*. The priests distributed new effigies in exchange, and among the latter was one covered with gold foil. The devotee to whose lot this gilded bullfinch happened to fall counted himself secure for a year against all dangers or consequences of deception. In the beginning of the present century the custom was extended to Tokyo, where it is widely observed up to the present time. The wooden *uso* is carved from the sacred *sakaki* (*olevera japonica*).

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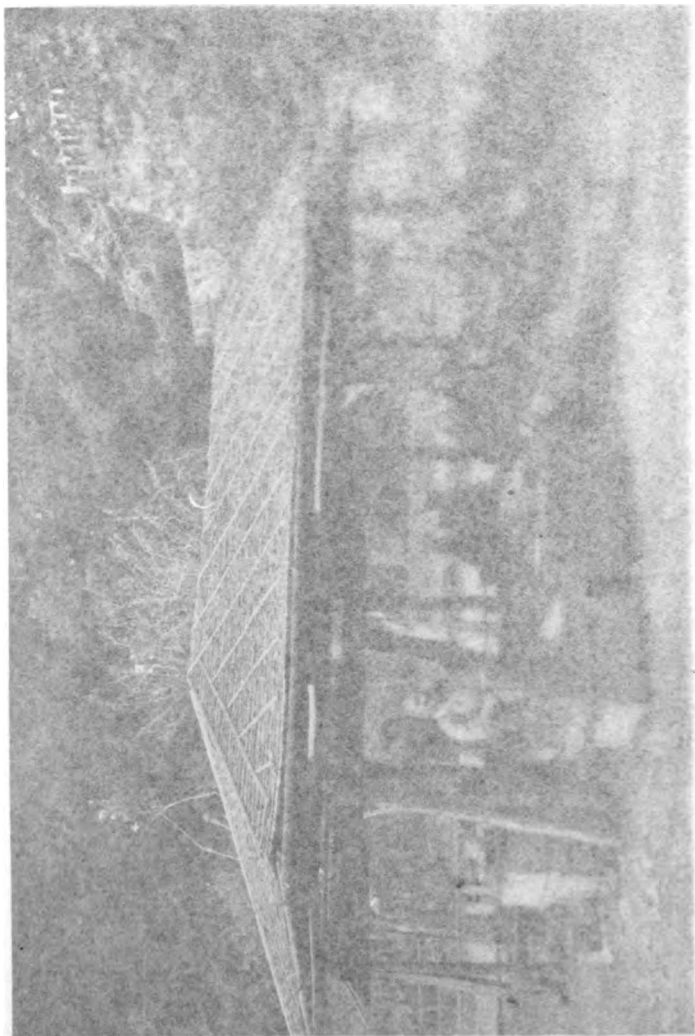
month, sacred *saké* (*miki*) and rice dumplings are offered to this mysterious being at the domestic altar. There is, in truth, no more mysterious divinity in the Japanese pantheon — a divinity of doubtful sex, said by some to be the youngest daughter of the dragon king, whose palace is at the bottom of the sea, and described by others as a sort of steersman spirit who guides the sequence of the years through the changes of the compass points. The average Japanese wastes no more brain fibre over the enlightenment of these arcana than the average Christian does over the orthodoxy of the logos. It is a traditional part of the New Year's observances to fill with votive wine the sacred bottles (*on-miki-dokuri*) reserved for that purpose, and to flank them with plump dumplings of rice flour, just as it is a duty of joy to build up at the threshold pillars of longevity and an arch of sweet atmosphere.

There is little in the way of *fête* or pastime to distinguish the first half of the second month. The innumerable shrines of Inari throughout the country are thronged with worshippers on the first "day of the horse" (*hatsu-uma*), generally about

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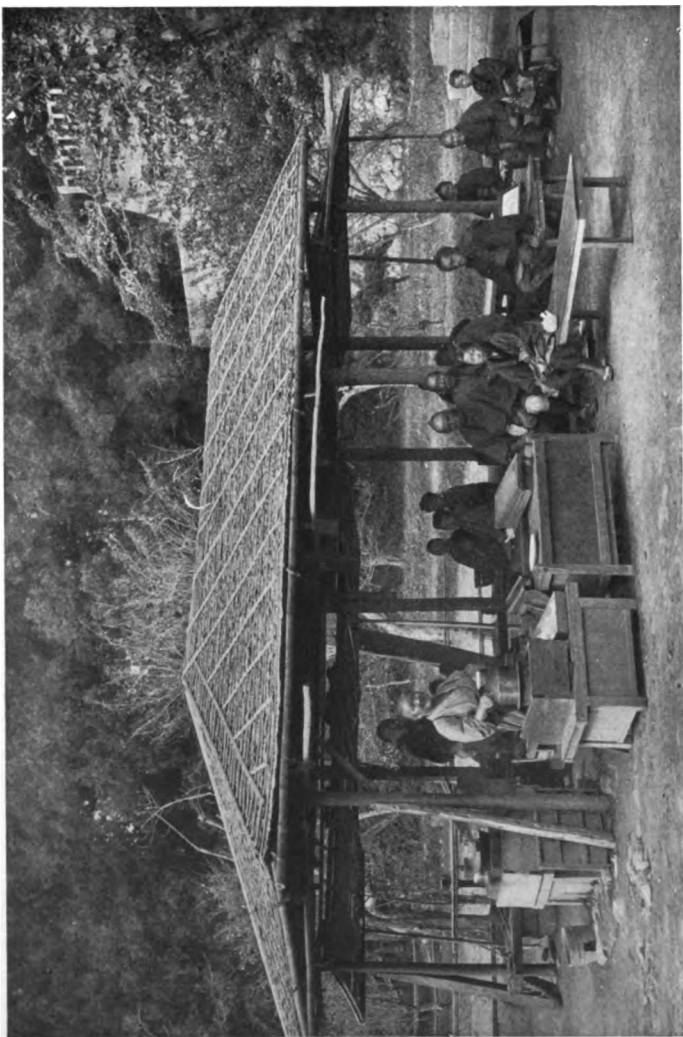
the 2d of the month; lights are placed in the pillar-lamps; flags are hoisted, and after praying for agricultural prosperity the people feast on "red rice" (*seki-han*), the invariable dish at seasons of congratulation. This day, also, used to be counted specially auspicious for the commencement of children's studies, but modern civilisation has severed the old-fashioned connection between education and the cycles of stems and signs. Still, however, there are housewives so conservative of tradition that only on the second day of the second month will they consent to engage a new woman-servant, such having been the ancient rule. Agents (*keiwan*) for the hire of domestic servants constitute a numerous and for the most part an unscrupulous class. Their occupation includes also letting and selling of houses and lands, but recourse to their services is avoided as much as possible by respectable folks. They depend for their fees on the success of the business intrusted to them, and it is well understood that female servants may be "procured" from a *keiwan* for purposes other than domestic employment.

The first fifteen days of the second month are



lights are placed in the house, and after praying for the people feast on "red" (the most valuable dish at seasons of dearth) and, on the day, also, used to be counted as the day for the commencement of children, when civilisation has severed the connection between education and the omens and signs. Still, however, the people are so conservative of tradition that on the second day of the second month they are wont to engage a new woman-servant, and to begin the ancient rule. Agents of the Government of domestic servants constitute for the most part an unscrupulous class; their occupation includes also letting and selling of houses and lands, but recourse to their services is avoided as much as possible by respectable folks. They depend for their fees on the success of the business intrusted to them, and it is well understood that female servants may be "procured" from a *lekkan* for purposes other than domestic employment.

The first fifteen days of the second month are



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known as the time of the "insects' tremor" (*ket-chitsu*); the second fifteen as the "spring equinox" (*shum-bun*). It is supposed that the insects which have lain dormant throughout the winter feel the touch of spring, and start in their sleep, preluding the bursting of the plum blossoms, which takes place from the 15th. Visits to the plum forests mark the beginning of the year's open-air *fêtes*. Appreciation of natural beauties is a sense that has attained extraordinary development in Japan. It is independent of social refinement or philosophical education. The blacksmith's apprentice and the scullery maid welcome the advent of the flower time as rapturously as do the dilettante and the noble dame. In the case of the plum there are features that appeal with special force to the æsthetic instincts of the people. The gnarled, age-worn aspect of the gloomy tree contrasts so powerfully with the fresh softness of its pearl-like blossoms, and the absence of leaves so enhances the sanguine temerity of the fragile flowers that the Japanese discover in this effort of nature a hundred allegories pointing the victory of hope over despair, the renewal of vigour among decay, the triumph of for-

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tune over the blight of adversity. A library might be filled with the verselets that have been composed in honour of the plum flowers and suspended from the branches of favourite trees in the groves to which all classes of the people flock at this season.

We have spoken of battle-board and shuttlecock, kite-flying and archery as sports considered specially appropriate to the New Year, but there are other games which, though not limited to any particular period, are naturally played with exceptional zest at that time. Football used to be one of them ; but the old-fashioned *ke-mari*, imported from China a dozen centuries ago, has now been completely ousted by its Occidental representative. The essence of the sport, as practised in China and Japan, was to kick the ball as high as possible and to keep it always in flight. There were no goals, no organised systems of assault and defence, and the pastime was essentially aristocratic. Hand-ball (*te-mari*) is the corresponding amusement of the gentle sex. The reader must not imagine anything in the nature of English "fives." Hand-ball, as the

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Japanese girl plays it, is a combination of refined dexterity and graceful movement. The ball is struck perpendicularly on the ground, and the player performs a complete pirouette in time to strike it again as it rebounds. Sometimes she meets it at the summit of its bound and arrests it for a second on the back of her fingers before reversing her hand and striking the ball downwards again preparatory to a new pirouette; sometimes she makes it leap so high that she can pirouette twice before it springs again from the ground, and, all the while, she and her companions chant a song in unison with these lithe movements. Victory depends upon not letting the ball escape beyond the range of circle and stroke, but victors and vanquished alike have the satisfaction of displaying to the full that "eloquence of form" which constitutes the speech of the coquette. There are other methods of playing the game, but they need not occupy our attention here; unless, indeed, we make an exception in favour of *o-te-dama*, which has for its paraphernalia three, five or seven tiny rectangular bags filled with small beans, and which de-

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mands only a fraction of the exertion required by *te-mari* proper. To tell how these miniature bags are manipulated would call for two or three pages of text and two or three scores of illustration. But if any lady has a beautiful hand and arm, a supple wrist, a quick eye and muscles capable of nice adjustment, the Japanese accomplishment of *o-te-dama* deserves her serious attention.

To this context, also, belongs *sugo-roku*, or the "ranging of sixes," which, though it includes the demoralising element of dice, is of all indoor pastimes the most generally affected in Japan. The "race game," familiar in Europe and America, is so closely akin to Japanese *sugo-roku* that it is difficult to doubt their common parentage. There is a broad sheet divided into lettered or pictorial sections, from one to another of which the player progresses according to the number thrown by him with a single die. The game is said to have had its origin in India,¹ whence it found its way to Japan in the

¹ Japanese tradition says that it was invented by an Indian prince during a period of imprisonment. The hybrid nature of the name *sugo-roku* indicates a foreign origin.

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eighth century. At first it was prohibited on account of its gambling character, but eventually the Buddhist priests took it up and converted it into an instrument for inculcating virtue. An illustrated ladder of moral tenets, varied by immoral laches, led to heaven or precipitated into hell, and young people were expected to derive a vicarious respect for the ethical precepts that marked the path to victory. The game thenceforth became a vehicle of instruction as well as amusement, its pictures representing sometimes official grades or religious terms. A cognate amusement, without the use of dice, is the "poem card" game (*uta-garuta*). This, as its name *karuta*—a Japanese rendering of the Spanish word *carta*—suggests, is partly of foreign origin. Before their contact with the West, the Japanese had a pastime called "poem shells"—*uta-kai*, or *kai-awase*,—the precursor of "poem cards." In its earliest day, this amusement consisted simply in joining the shells of a bivalve. A number of shells, twenty, thirty or more, constituted the pack, from which one was taken by each player, the remainder being

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spread on the mats to form a "deck." The player's object was to find the mate of the shell dealt to him. By and by, as the game received aristocratic patronage, shells of special beauty were selected, carefully polished and placed in circular boxes of rich gold lacquer, which figured among the furniture of every refined lady's boudoir. Then a new feature was added: the affinity of two shells was indicated by inscribing on one the first half of some celebrated couplet, and on the other the second half. The writing of poetry—or to speak more accurately, the knack of expressing some pretty fancy in metrical form—had a place among the essential accomplishments of an educated lady or gentleman in Japan, and involved intimate acquaintance with all the classical gems in that field of literature. It is easy to see, therefore, that these "poem shells" became at once a source of pleasure and of instruction. The Portuguese, coming in the sixteenth century, brought with them playing cards as well as Christianity and firearms. Strange to say, however, though the Japanese welcomed the cards, they rejected the

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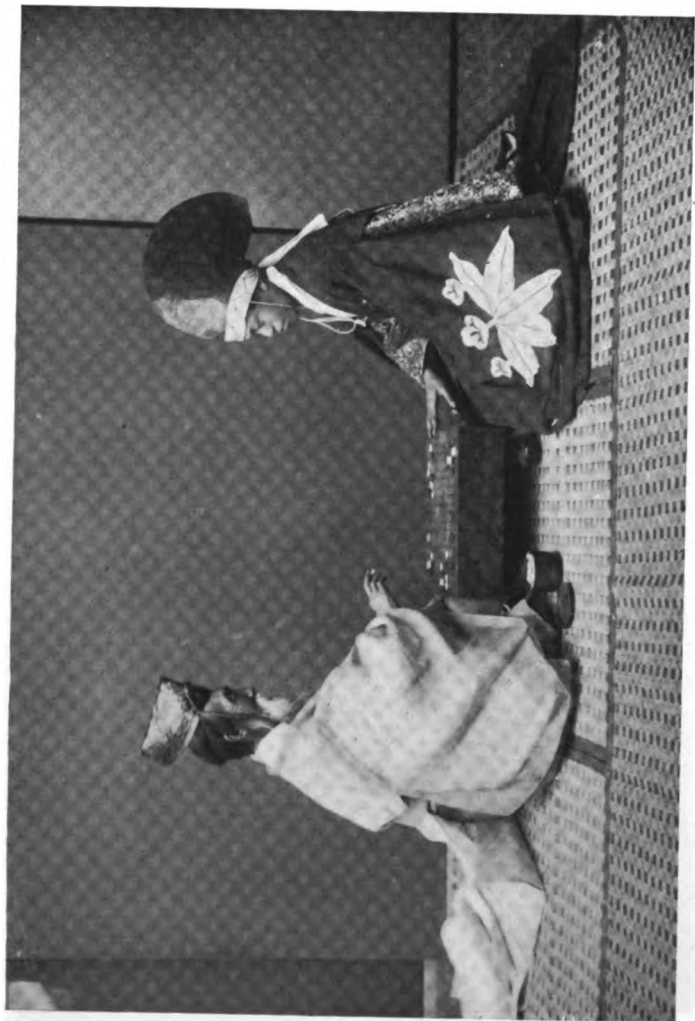
foreign manner of using them, and devised a game of their own, which may be compared to whist, but is, on the whole, more complicated and difficult. It is called "flower joining" (*hana-arwase*). We must refrain from any attempt to explain its intricate processes here, merely noting the essentially Japanese feature, namely, that every card bears a representation of some flower, with the name and appearance of which the player must be familiar. Cards are also substituted for shells in the "poem shell" pastime described above, and these *uta-garuta* (poem cards) occupy in the repertoire of feminine and youthful pastimes the same place that the difficult game of *hana-arwase* holds among the amusements of men. In Japanese estimation, however, no game supports comparison for a moment with that of *go*, to which foreign translators give the misleading name "checkers," though it bears about the same relation to checkers as *vingt-et-un* does to whist. There is probably no other game in the world that demands such analytical insight and genius for combination. Every educated man plays *go*, but

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very few develop sufficient skill to be classed in one of the nine grades of experts, and not once in a century does a player succeed in obtaining the diploma of the ninth or highest grade. The board and men—small, round counters of shell, ivory or stone—used for playing *go* serve also for a pastime called *gomoku-narabe*, or “five in a row,” a simple amusement, affected by girls and children, and mistaken by many foreigners for *go* itself, with which it has no manner of connection. Chess (*shogi*), too, is very popular. It is cognate with the “royal game” of the Occident, but there are thirty-six pieces instead of thirty-two, and the board has eighty-one squares instead of sixty-four. On the other hand, though the movements and names of the pieces resemble those of their Western representatives, their powers are not so large, and it has consequently been inferred that the Japanese game is simpler than the Occidental. The inference is probably erroneous, for any element of simplicity due to the reduced power of the pieces is compensated by their greater number, and by the fact that, at a certain stage, pieces



the Japanese game is a more complicated one than the European, and not one which can be learned by obtaining a few lessons from a first grade. The Japanese use counters of such, that the Chinese, who play *go* serve also the purpose of *go* and *hane*, or "five in hand," and is a game, affected by girls and boys, and is liked by many foreigners. It is a game which has no manner of comparison with *go*, too, is very popular. It is called the "royal game" of the Japanese. It has thirty-six pieces instead of thirty, and the board has eighty-one squares instead of sixty-four. On the other hand, the movements and names of the pieces are not those of their Western representatives, the pieces are not so large, and it can be properly inferred that the Japanese game is simpler than the Oriental. The inference is probably erroneous, for any element of simplicity due to the reduced power of the pieces is compensated by their greater number, and by the fact that, at a certain stage, pieces



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previously won or lost reappear in a combination. A form of chess to which the term applies only by courtesy — namely, *tsume-shogi*, or the imprisonment of one freely moving piece by several others of very restricted power — is much played by the lower orders.

Are the Japanese a gambling people? The answer must be no and yes. Gambling has never been practised in Japan on a scale commensurate with European records. Such an incident as the ruin of an educated man by cards and dice is comparatively rare. The game of *hana-arwase*, spoken of above, might be expected to attain the rank held by whist or piquet in Europe and America, and thus to become a recognised amusement in refined circles. But a certain measure of discredit has always attached to it. Cards are not among the recognised pastimes of polite society, and the card-player is counted a *mauvais sujet* in a serious sense. "Poem cards" and *sugo-roku* are, of course, considered perfectly innocent: no betting is connected with them. But players of *hana-arwase* sometimes put up large stakes, and repair to tea-

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houses and restaurants to carry on the game in secret. These, however, are invariably young folks who have not yet concluded the sowing of their wild oats. A man of mature years who devotes his evenings to such doings recognises himself as a vicious person. Certain sections of the lower orders, on the other hand, are not restrained by any sentiment of self-respect in this matter. Grooms, drawers of *jinrikisha* and carriers of *kago*¹ often while away the intervals of their toil with a game of cards, and stake their hardly earned coins on the result. One may occasionally see a group of these men huddled together in some out-of-the-way corner and rapt in their illicit pursuit, while one of their number stands sentinel to watch for the coming of a constable. The law is very strict. Whenever

¹ A vehicle for seating one person. Shortly described, the *kago* consists of a flat, circular seat held between bamboo V's which are slung from a horizontal pole. The pole is carried on the shoulders of the men. The *kago* was the principal means of transport before the days of the *jinrikisha* (a species of perambulator with shafts), and is still used in mountainous districts where wheel traffic is difficult. A more aristocratic conveyance than the *kago* is the *nori-mono*, which resembles a little house with its ridge pole prolonged so as to be capable of resting on men's shoulders. The *nori-mono* is sometimes richly lacquered and elaborately decorated. It is furnished with fine bamboo blinds, so that the inmate can enjoy privacy. In modern times, the *nori-mono* has come to serve as a hearse at the funerals of the poor.

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and wherever he is observed, the card-player for money may be arrested. There must be distinct evidence, however, that money changes hands. Gambling-houses do not exist and never have existed. The three-card man, the hunt-the-pea artist, and the roulette board are not seen at public *fêtes*. They would be promptly "run in." But the professional gambler does exist. So far as his art is concerned he is generally a poor species of ruffian. Loaded dice and sufficient sleight of hand to substitute them for the legitimate ivories are his stock in trade. There is no scope for skill nor any redeeming doctrine of chances and probabilities. Youths with money or expectations are enticed into the society of these professionals and robbed until they are no longer worth robbing. Still the field for exercising talent so rudimentary is very limited. The gambler, therefore, moulds himself on finer lines. He is an accomplished man of the world; a charming companion; fatally versed in all the intricacies of *hana-arwase* and competent to supplement skill by art. He frequents fashionable tea-houses and inveigles pleasure-seekers into

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little games with costly results. It may be objected that these sharpers must speedily become known to the owners of tea-houses. So they do, but that does not much inconvenience them. The professional gamblers in the great cities organise themselves into cliques and obey a code of rigorous regulations. The domain of a clique, its "rope-stretch (*nawa-bari*), varies in area: sometimes it is limited to one ward; sometimes, in the case of a guild-master with a specially "current face," its authority extends over half the city. But, wide or narrow, each domain is inviolable: no professional from without ventures to trespass unless he has obtained a "pass" (*watari*) from the guild-master. Every breach of the law other than card-sharping or the use of loaded dice, or some other measure adopted with the authority of the guild and in its interests, is strictly tabooed and, if detected, is punished by the guild with exemplary severity. It is easy to understand that keepers of tea-houses venturing to pit themselves against such organisations, may have their business crippled. The tea-house itself cannot always show a clean

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record. It is often a place of assignation; it fosters within its precincts vices which, if discovered, would involve its ruin. Therefore, in order to live himself, the proprietor is fain to let the professional gambler live also, and to make what he can out of him. Vice battens on vice. The detective police are sharp enough, but not incorruptible. That they sometimes take pay from the "wait-and-meet tea-house" and from the professional gambler also is undoubted. So far as these things go—and they are here set down in their worst guise—there is gambling in Japan. But the evil flourishes in holes and corners and within very narrow limits. Thus far it has never infected society; never attained the dimensions of an epidemic.

Numerical symmetry has always possessed a charm for the Japanese, and may, perhaps, be chiefly responsible for the fact that during many centuries they have specially fêted the 3d day of the third month, the 5th of the fifth, the 7th of the seventh and the 9th of the ninth. These four days, together with the 7th day of the first month, constitute the *go-sekku*, or "five festivals

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of the seasons." There is a weird and fanciful legend which connects the five celebrations with the story of an ox-headed incarnation of Buddha, who married the youngest daughter of the dragon king, and subsequently carved into five pieces the body of a prince who had opposed his quest for a wife; but the fabrication of this gruesome tale evidently succeeded the birth of the custom for which it professes to account. The celebration on the 3d day of the third month is commonly called the *hina-matsuri*, or dolls' festival. It is the *fête* of little maidens, and their manner of celebrating it is to marshal a multitude of dolls representing historical characters, with their vassals, servitors, soldiers, equipages and paraphernalia. Incredible care and sometimes great expense are lavished on the preparation of these toys. Every detail is studiously exact, whether of costume, of armour, of arms, of head-dress and foot-gear, of camp or palace furniture, of utensils for cooking and for feasting, of arrangements for wedding ceremonies and state progresses. Sometimes the figures and their accessories number as many as from five hundred to a thousand articles,

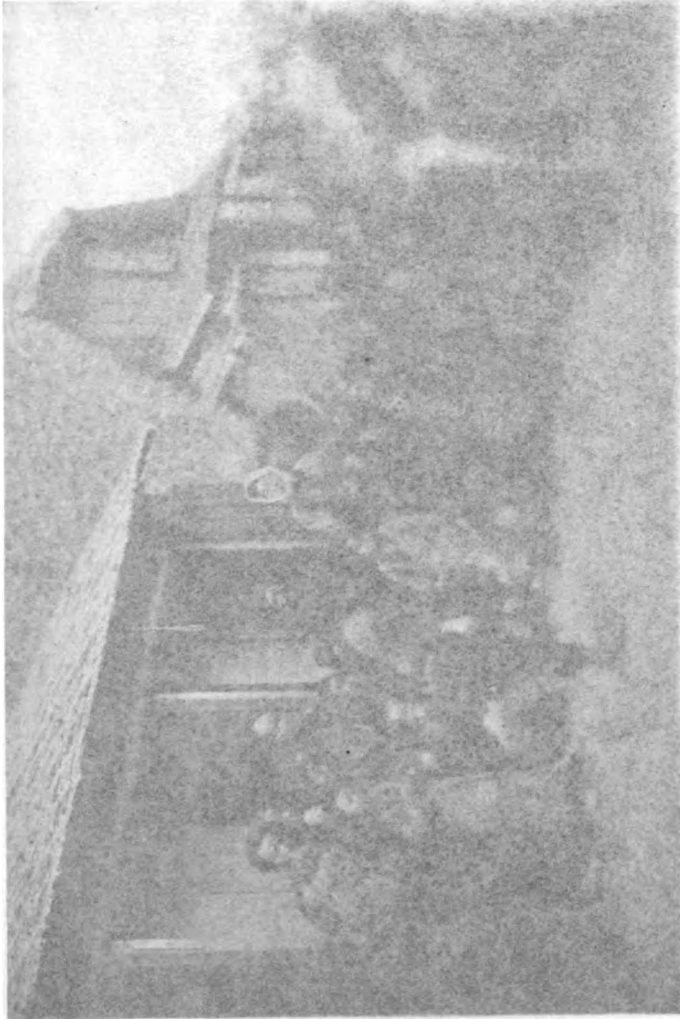
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and the work of setting them out is a delight of days' duration, no less than a liberal education in the customs and etiquette of refined life. In every house offerings are made of white *saké* and herb cake (*kusa-mochi*), that is to say, cake made of rice flour mixed with leaves of the artemisia (*yomogi*), or of "mother-and-child" shrub (*haha-ko-gusa*). Of course costly collections of *o-hina-sama*, or "honourable effigies," as the little maidens call them, are preserved from generation to generation, descending from mother to daughter. But the demand for new ones gives employment to a considerable body of artists, and during the week that precedes the *fête* day, a busy market is held in such quarters of the capital cities as from time immemorial have been counted the chief emporia of these elaborate toys; for example, Nakabashi, Owari-cho and Jikkendama in Tokyo; Shijo and Gojo in Kyoto, and Mido-maye and Junkei-cho in Osaka. So soon as the *fête* is over, the *o-hina-sama* are packed away in silk and wadding, not to see the light again until the third month of the following year. There is no doubt that the idea of this dolls' festival came

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from China, but the development that it received after its adoption by the Japanese amounts to complete metamorphosis. The Chinese conception was that the first "serpent-day" (called *jo-nichi*, or "expulsion day") in the third month should be devoted to exorcising the evil influences to which each person is individually exposed. For that purpose an exorcist supplied a paper puppet, with which the recipient rubbed his body. This *nade-mono* (lit. rubbing thing) was then returned to the exorcist, who performed certain rites over it. By and by it became customary to range the *nade-mono* of a household on a shelf with offerings of wine and food, and out of that habit grew the *o-hina-sama*. It is a record fairly illustrating the changes undergone by the customs of the East-Asian continent after transplantation to Japanese soil.

Tradition says that when Sakyamuni was born a dragon appeared and poured water over the babe. The incident is commemorated in Japan on the 4th day of the fourth month, when the "washing of Buddha" (*kwan-butsu* or *yoku-butsu*) takes place. An image of the god—a



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It is a curious request that I received from a friend in Japan, amounts to a translation of the Chinese conception of the "serpent day" called *jo-ryu-jitsu* or "dragon day" in the third month of the lunar year, for excluding the evil influences of the serpent, each person is individually exposed. The friend who supplied a paper on the subject, himself rubbed his body with a piece of rough rubbing thing) was then called a *jo-ryu-jitsu* dragon, who performed certain ceremonies, and by it became customary to place a *jo-ryu-jitsu* of a household on a shelf, and out of that of wine and food, and out of that of the *jo-ryu-jitsu*. It is a record fairly well known, and undergone by the customs of the East continent after transplantation to Japan.

It is said that when Sakyamuni was born, he appeared and poured water over the earth. The incident is commemorated in Japan on the 15th day of the fourth month, when the "washing of Buddha" (*harae-butsu* or *yoku-butsu*) takes place. An image of the god—a



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birthday Buddha (*tanjō-butsu*)—is set up in a hall decorated with flowers, and each worshipper pours water or *amacha* (a decoction of hydrangea leaves) over the effigy from a tiny ladle. This being a temple rite does not evoke much enthusiasm, but evidences of its popular observance may be seen in decorations of azalea sprays, *shikimi* boughs and *u* (*deutzia scrabra*) blossoms set up at the gates of houses. As usual, the idea of averting evil dictates the procedure of the time. Worms are the special objects of exorcism. A leaf of shepherd's purse (*nazuna*) is tied inside the lantern of the sleeping-chamber, and over the lintel is pasted an amulet¹ written with ink which has been moistened with the liquid of lustration (*amacha*). Again the rice-flour cake is offered at the domestic altar. It now takes the form of a lotus petal with capsule of bean-paste (*an*). In the cities hucksters go about selling ducks' eggs, which, eaten on this day, are supposed to be efficacious against palsy; and occasionally itinerant priests with close-cropped hair and a pecu-

¹ The formula inscribed on this paper is curiously simple: — "The 4th of the fourth month is an auspicious day for killing *kamisago-nushi*" (larvæ of the meat fly).

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liar costume pass from street to street calling out *o-shaka! oshaka!* or “Buddhas to sell, Buddhas to buy,” and performing buffoon tricks to gaping crowds. The stock in trade of these *gwannin-bo* (depraved priests) consists of little images of Sakyamuni and five-coloured flags of the *u* flower, the whole carried ignominiously in common water-pails.

The fourth month of the old calendar, the May of modern times, is distinguished above all other months as the season of flowers. It is then that the cherry blooms, and in Japanese eyes the cherry flower typifies everything that is at once refined, beautiful and vigorous. The blossom itself has no special excellence: it is as cherry blossoms are everywhere. But by massing the trees in positions that lend themselves to a *coup d'œil*, by arching them over long avenues beside broad rivers, and by setting them in a framework of exquisite scenery, there are produced glowing effects and harmonious contrasts which, enhanced by the opalescent atmosphere of a Japanese spring, are worthy of the passionate enthusiasm they arouse. It has

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been sometimes asserted, sometimes denied, that a keener love of flowers and a more subtle sense of their beauties exist, either by instinct or by education, among these far-Eastern people than can be found anywhere else. Those who take the affirmative view point to the vast crowds of men, women and children that throng the cherry groves during the short season of bloom; to the universality of this affectionate admiration, as potent to draw the grey-headed statesman or the philosopher from his studio as to attract lads and lasses on the threshold of life and love; to the familiar acquaintance with flowers and their habits that is possessed even by artisans and scavengers; and to the fact that the Japanese manage to derive much wider gratification from flowers and to utilise them more effectively as factors of public pleasure than any other nation does. In the science of horticulture they rank far below Europeans and Americans. They had practically no knowledge of botany until they acquired it from the West. Their gardens have never included conservatories of rare exotics. It has not occurred to them to

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organise competitive flower-shows in the Occidental fashion, and nature has bequeathed to them only a small portion of the floral wealth with which England, France and the United States are dowered. Yet they have made so much of their comparatively scanty gifts that the blossoms of each season are a feature in their lives, a prime element in their happiness. If they possessed the laburnum, the lilac, the hawthorn, the gorse, the bluebell, the snowdrop, the honeysuckle, the jessamine, the primrose and all the other "letters of the angel tongue" written on the fair faces of some Western countries, it is possible, indeed, that the keenness of their appreciation might have been dulled by satiety; but, judging by the facts as we find them, the strong probability is that they would have taught the world new ways of profiting by these gifts of nature. Certainly they stand alone among nations in so far as concerns the public organisation of their taste for flowers and the universal fidelity with which they gratify it. We shall not pause here to describe the cherry *fêtes* of Tokyo, Kyoto and other Japanese cities.

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In former times, when the patrician stood above the law, and when the disguise of an eye-mask—an “eye-wig” as it was jocosely called—sufficed to justify almost any license, these motley crowds were sometimes unwilling witnesses of rude practical jokes. But the policeman’s baton is now more potent than the *Samurai’s* sword, and beyond the discord of a vinous refrain, or, perhaps, entanglement in a group of erratic roysterers, the peaceful citizen has nothing to apprehend. Boat-races on the Sumida River in Tokyo and athletic sports in the parks are features of this month, but such things are modern innovations and do not yet rank higher than second-rate imitations of their Occidental models. Reference may be made *en passant* to a pretty but now obsolete pastime associated with this season, the game of “water windings” (*kyoku-sui*). It had its origin in China and obtained great vogue at one time among the aristocrats of Japanese society, but the age has passed it by. A cup of wine launched upon a stream was suffered to float at the caprice of the current, and verselets were composed before

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it came within reach of the convives posted along the banks. A trivial pastime in truth, but it is in the genius of the Japanese to make much of slender resources.

There is another kind of picnic which survives all changes of fashion, and attracts pleasure-seekers in as great numbers now as it did a hundred years ago. It may be seen at its best in Tokyo. On certain days in May and early June, when the spring tides recede from the shallow reaches along the southern suburb of the city, large spaces of weed-covered sand emerge from the water, and adjacent to them the sea spreads a covering only a few inches deep over wide areas where shell-fish congregate. The days when nature behaves in that manner are marked with a red letter in the citizen's calendar. Engagements that must wait weeks or even months for fulfilment, engagements to gather shells in company, are formed between persons of all ages, green lads and lasses, men and women in middle life, and old folks to whom the spring airs no longer bring more than a fitful suggestion of "light fancies." These

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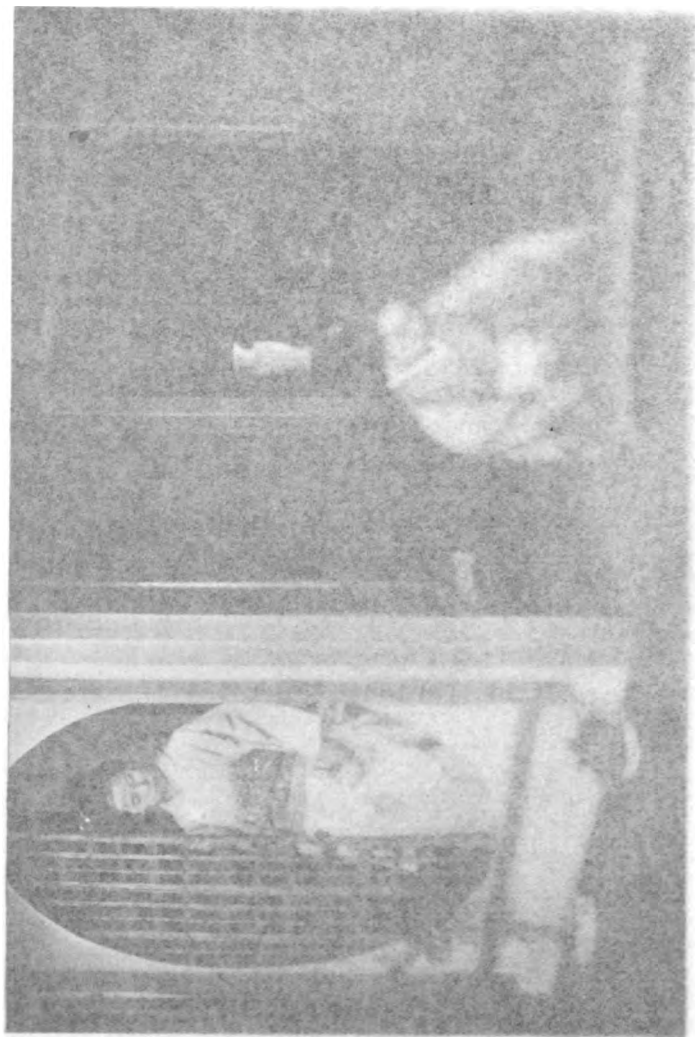
pleasure-seekers launch themselves in the favourite vehicle of Tokyo picnics, the *yane-bune*,— a kind of gondola, — and float seaward with the ebbing tide, singing snatches of song the while to the accompaniment of tinkling *samisen*, or of that graceful game *ken*,¹ so well devised to display the charms of a pretty hand and arm. Such outings differ in one important respect from the more orthodox picnics of Tokyo folks,—the visits to plum-blooms, cherry blossoms, peony beds, chrysanthemum puppets, iris ponds and river openings. They differ in the fact that there is no display of fine apparel. Bright and skilfully blended colours there are indeed ; but the embroidered girdle, the elaborately woven robe of silk *crêpe*, the dainty armlet and the costly hairpin are absent. Camlets and cottons constitute the proper costume of the day, and a pretty air of business resolution replaces the

¹ This game, probably more widely played than any other in Japan, depends upon the principle that certain objects, animate or inanimate, correspond to certain combinations of the fingers, and that the objects thus represented have relative values. The players clap and wave their hands in unison with some rhythmic chant, and mark the pauses of the rhythm by these digital combinations. There is an almost endless variety of methods, and the graceful dexterity displayed by experts is most charming.

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leisurely archness generally characteristic of the budding damsel in Japan.

To two articles of apparel only do the ladies give special heed. Of these, the more important is the petticoat, if such a misleading and commonplace term may be applied to the closely fitting underskirt of Japanese habiliments—the *yumoji*, a broad band of silk, folded around the body and reaching from the waist to a little below the knee. In the vast majority of cases the colour of this item of clothing is crimson. Its glowing uniformity may, however, be varied by sundry devices, from an almost imperceptible sprig pattern of darker hue to wonders of deft weaving and happy caprice, and a quick-eyed ethnologist may look to see much exercise of tasteful coquetry in the *yumoji* that grace the suburban shell-beds of Tokyo at spring-tide picnics. The second article demanding and receiving unusual care is nothing more or less than a towel. Here again we are perplexed by the paucity of our Anglo-Saxon language. “Petticoat” may pass for *yumoji*, *faute de mieux*, but to speak of the *tenugui* (literally



is especially characteristic of the Japanese woman.

Of apparel only do the ladies wear a kimono. For these, the more important articles, such a misleading and comprehensive term may be applied to the closely related articles of Japanese habiliments—the *hachimaki*, a broad band of silk, folded around the head, extending from the waist to a little below the knees. In the vast majority of cases the *hachimaki* of the men of clothing is crimson. The color of the *hachimaki* may, however, be varied almost at will, from an almost imperceptible pink to a deep, darker hue to wonders of drift and color, and happy caprice, and a quick-eyed observer might look to see much exercise of the imagination in the *yumoji* that grace the cushions and beds of Tokyo at spring-tide parties. The second article demanding and requiring unusual care is nothing more or less than a towel. Here again we are perplexed by the paucity of our Anglo-Saxon language. "artificial" may pass for *yumoji*, *fente de main*, but to speak of the *tenugui* (literally



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“hand wiper”) as a towel is to convey a very false impression of the little blue-and-white linen kerchief which these shell-seeking ladies twist into the daintiest coiffures conceivable, not so much to shade their complexions as to preserve the gloss and symmetry of the achievements that their hair-dressers have turned out for the occasion. The water, as has been said, is only a few inches deep, but a few inches mean much when skirts have to be kept from dabbling in the brine and arms must be free for a plunge above the elbow. It will be understood, therefore, that the shell-beds gleam with such a display of white ankles as would shock a prude. But prudery is not among the paraphernalia taken to sea on these occasions. The Japanese are nothing if not natural, and when the business of the moment demands certain concessions, no one is supposed to look beyond the necessity. But in truth it may be safely said that delicacy and modesty are less outraged at the *shio-hi* in Tokyo than in many an Occidental salon. The wide sleeves of the upper garment are restrained by a cord (*tasuki*) crossed

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over the breast and back; the skirts are tucked under the inner girdle, and in that guise merry girls and women paddle about, groping in the soft sand that closes over their white feet and picking up shell-fish of many kinds in considerable quantities. Grown men, middle-aged men and even old men do not disdain to join the fun, and seem to find genuine pleasure and excitement in delving after hidden crustacea, while the sea breeze whispers of luncheon, and toys with the crimson *yumoji* of the gentle gleaners. Luncheon, of course, is a special feature of these outings; for in each boat there is a little furnace piled with glowing charcoal, and on this the captured shell-fish crack and sputter, until, sweetened by a drop of soy at the proper moment, they become a delicacy fit for any palate. Then there is leisurely drifting homewards on the bosom of the rising tide, with faces that have imbibed the sun's glow and limbs that retain a pleasantly languid sense of recent exertion.

XVI

OBSERVANCES AND PASTIMES

(*Concluded*)



THE BOYS' *FÊTE* (*TANGO*) on the 5th day of the fifth month is a particularly conspicuous event owing to the fact that at every house where a male child has been born during the preceding twelvemonth a carp, made of paper or silk, is raised, banner-wise. The carp is attached by its mouth to the end of a flag-staff, and being inflated by the breeze, undulates overhead, so that, throughout the days of this observance, thousands of big fish seem to be writhing and gyrating above the roofs of the cities. In Japanese eyes the carp typifies indomitable resolution. As it sturdily faces the stream and leaps up the waterfall, so fond parents hope that their little lads will rise in the world and overcome all obstacles. The sweet-flag

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and the iris, now in full bloom, play a conspicuous part in this *fête*. Bunches of the former, together with sprays of mugwort (*yomogi*) are raised at the eaves of houses, and *saké* seasoned with petals of the iris is the beverage of the season. Sprays of the sweet-flag that have thus been exposed are believed to imbibe the medicinal dew of heaven, and are consequently placed in the family baths for the invigoration of bathers. In the alcoves, warriors, battle-steeds, armour and weapons of war — often beautiful and brilliant examples of skilled workmanship and decoration — are ranged, but these relics of bygone days are fast losing their interest for the youth of the nation, and since it is impossible to combine picturesqueness with accuracy in any representation of the military uniforms and accoutrements of modern times, alcoves that used once to be crowded with gallant puppets in gorgeous panoply now make no contribution to the gaiety of the *tango*. Tradition tells us nothing certain about the origin of this celebration. Some of its details — as, for example, the fact that the rice cakes peculiar to the time are wrapped in bamboo leaves and the bean-confections in oak

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leaves, or that, at the hour of the hare, all lights are extinguished for a brief interval in temples and houses — have their own special legends to explain them, but the festival as a whole is a mystery. We cannot pause here to enter into minutiae, neither have we space to speak at any length of the series of flower *fêtes* that mark the various seasons, the picnics to the wistaria, the azalea, the iris, the lotus, the peonies, the chrysanthemums, the orchids and the autumnal tints. The ideal of the Japanese is to have a festival of flower or foliage for every month, but their manner of enjoying themselves on these occasions is uniformly simple. They do not carry with them stores of provisions and ham-pers of wine, but are content with the fare that the local tea house offers, and to have indited a felicitous couplet and suspended it from the branch of some notable tree or from the stem of some luxuriantly blooming plant is to have attained the summit of enjoyment. Were it possible to banish the spasm-shouts that men mistake for songs and the twanging of the unmusical *samisen*, the out-doors *fêtes* of Japan would be the acme of refined pleasure-seeking.

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We pass by the ceremonies of the sixth month when at twilight by river-banks *Shinto* priests set up cross-shaped periapts (*gohei*) and pray for the dispersal of evil influences, or, into the stream thus purified, cast miniature paper surcoats, shaped by the hands of worshippers and bearing the legend, "Peace be on this household" (*kanai anzen*). The growth of modern ideas tends to weaken the people's fidelity to these purely religious rites, which, indeed, might well be spared from the nation's customs. Very brief reference will also suffice in the case of the *sekku*, on the 7th of the seventh month, for few persons now place faith in the cakes (*sakuhei*) which, eaten upon that day, were formerly supposed to avert ague; nor is the "marriage of the stars" regarded any longer with even traditional curiosity. Yet the latter legend once inspired a pretty ceremony. Four tables used to be placed in the garden — especially in the park of the "Palace of Pure Freshness," for the custom was always favoured by the Imperial family — and thereon, flanked by smoking sticks of incense, vessels of water were set, to reflect the passage of the heavenly river (*ama-no-kawa*, *i. e.*, the Milky Way)

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by the Herdboy Prince (*Tanabata*) on his way to meet the Weaver Princess (*Ori-hime*). Connected with this ceremonial — purely Chinese in its origin — was the writing of verselets upon thin sheets of bamboo or fine-grained woods, and these *tanzaku*, as they are called, ultimately took the form of dainty tablets, decorated with devices in golden and silvern lacquer and tasselled with silk cords, many of which have found a place in Western collections merely for the sake of their prettiness. To this seventh month, however, — it must not be forgotten that we adhere to the terms of the old calendar, and that the so-called seventh month corresponds, approximately, with August, — to this seventh month belongs a celebration which retains much of its old vigour, and can never be entirely neglected so long as ancestral worship is the national cult. It is a *fête* known as *Urabon*, or more commonly *Bon*, intended for the welcome and entertainment of the spirits of the dead which are supposed to visit their loved survivors at this season. The nature of the occasion will at once suggest the profound sentiment connected with its observance. Five days are devoted to the rites,

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though it is not to be supposed that these are of an elaborate or complicated character. The chief duty is to prepare the *shoryodana*, or spirit-altar. It is a small mat of straw, having at the four corners bamboo pillars, between which is suspended the inevitable "sweet-air rope" (*shime-narwa*) with pendent decoration of wave-shaped vermicelli, sprays of chestnut, dried persimmons, yew berries, ears of millet, white egg-fruits, gourds and winter cherries. Over the straw floor are strewn bulrushes and leaves of the cockscomb and lespedeza; within the enclosure stand rods thrust into melons or egg-fruits which are cut into shapes of oxen or horses, — spirit vehicles, — and around the whole is erected a low belt of cedar leaves. The details are inviolable. Viands are, of course, provided for the use of the ghostly visitors. There are the cakes of welcome (*omukae-dango*) and the cakes of farewell (*okuri-dango*); there are rice-balls wrapped in lotus leaves; there is a humble dish called *imo-no-zuki*, which consists of potato-stems boiled and seasoned with soy, and there are fruits varying in kind and quantity according to the means of the household. Lanterns are suspended before each

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house, and at eventide on the 18th, tiny fires of hemp are lit to greet the coming spirits, and a vessel of water is placed outside that they may wash their feet. Again, on the night of the 16th, these feebly flickering lights shed their rays on the path of the departing visitors, and so the *fête* ends. The preparations are elaborate; the rites and observances of the simplest. It might be supposed that since the aerial visitors are regarded as guardians and assistants of their kinsfolk on earth, this, their one annual visit, would be converted into an occasion for propitiating their favour and enlisting their aid. But hospitality does not suggest that a guest should be importuned with petitions. There is some sprinkling of powdered incense over the embers of the hempen bonfire in order that the fumes, mingling with the ghostly essences that permeate the air, may smother evil influences; sometimes, too, men light their pipes in the flame, thinking thus to inhale good fortune; sometimes they step over the fire to avert or heal certain maladies, and sometimes they preserve the cinders as a charm against disease. But the spirits come and go unworried by petitions. Neither their ad-

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vent nor their presence inspires feelings of awe or horror. The average Japanese is not without a dread of ghosts, and may easily be persuaded into a quiet but firm conviction in the reality of a haunted house, but the spirits that come to visit him in his home at *Bon* time are friends whom he loves and trusts. His disposition is to receive them with dance and song rather than with shrinking and aversion, and it thus fell out that among the multitude of Japanese *fêtes* none was so conspicuously marked by dancing performances. We speak in the past, for these *Bon* dances have fallen under the ban of the law in modern Japan, and though still practised in the provinces, are no longer to be seen in the great cities. It is on record that, some two thousand years ago, men and women of all classes, princes and princesses of the blood not excepted, were wont to assemble upon hilltops or in the streets, and to engage in dances one object of which was identical with the motive of the modern ball, namely, to promote the interests of love. This custom was subsequently modified — like so many other Japanese customs — by Chinese influences, but much of its ancient character was

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certainly preserved in the *Bon* dances which the civilisation of new Japan taboos.

It is probable that very few foreigners ever learn to appreciate Japanese dancing. One reason for their want of sympathy is that they approach the study with prejudiced minds. Their conception of dancing is that it must be either musical gymnastics deriving their charm from harmony of sound and motion, and pleasurable chiefly to the performer, or a spectacular display, like the Occidental *ballet*, representing large combinations of graceful movements, enhanced by splendid scenery and accessories of painting and sculpture. But in Japan dancing has primarily a mimetic purpose. With rare exceptions, the dance represents some historical incident, some mythical legend, some scene from the realm of folklore or superstition. The technique is elaborate, and although the motions never suggest muscular effort or display abnormal contortions, it is nevertheless certain that physical training of the most rigorous character cannot be dispensed with, and that the very ease of the seemingly smooth and spontaneous action results from art hidden by

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its own perfection. It is also certain that the mechanics of the dance are as nothing to the Japanese spectator compared with the music of its motion, and that he interprets the *staccato* and *legato* of its passages with discrimination amounting almost to instinct and, in some degree, hereditary. In exceptional cases the foreigner's perception may be similarly subtle, but he must generally lack the faculty of apprehending the esoterics of the dance, and thus finds himself in the position of a man at an opera who has no *libretto*, or a play-goer without a knowledge of the plot. We have already seen that from prehistoric times dancing constituted a prominent feature in the worship of the deities, and that it had its origin in the fable which represents the inhabitants of heaven dancing before the cave into which the goddess of the sun had retired. From the sphere of religion it appears to have passed quickly and widely into the every-day life of the people, until at last the practice acquired a vogue unparalleled in any other country. Volumes might be written descriptive of the numerous dances taught to girls from their tender

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years, and, on a much smaller but still extensive scale, to boys also; and as for the repertoire of the professional expert, it is virtually inexhaustible. There have been occasions when the whole of the inhabitants of a city turned out in costume to celebrate some noted event by a universal dance. By such means did the citizens of Kyoto exhibit their joy when the capital of the empire was transferred to their city from Nara at the end of the eighth century, and by such means also they evinced their gratitude for a year of prosperity in subsequent eras. The latter dance, known as *hōnen-odori*, probably stands at the head of all performances of the kind in so far as concerns the number of those taking part in it and the variety of their costumes. Each district of the city had its distinguishing colour; light green silk for the East, in imitation of the dragon presiding in that quarter; crimson crêpe for the South, in unison with the plumage of the scarlet bird that soared there; black velvet for the North, to typify the dark panoply of military power; and white crêpe for the West, where the grey tiger dwelt.

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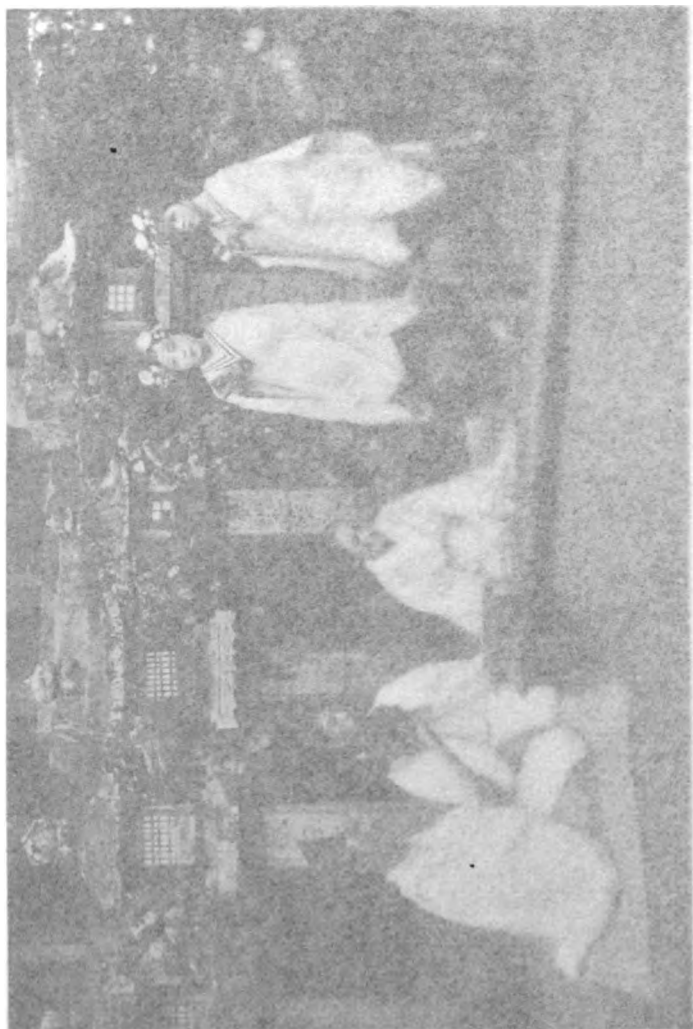
(These conceptions are all of Chinese origin.) These, it must be understood, were the ground colours of the dancer's garments: to the hues of the embroidered or woven decoration no limit was set, nor yet to the designs — a nightingale perched on a spray of blossoming plum; silver trout gleaming in blue streams; snowy herons roosting among pine boughs at Gion shrine; fiery maples glowing on the Kwacho hillside; rosy cherry petals floating over the Otowa waterfall, or the vulgar Venus (*Otafuku*) embracing a mushroom on Inari mountain — such and many other fancies the admirable skill of the weaver and the embroiderer depicted on the robes of this motley concourse, whose units, each disguised according to his or her fancy, as chair-bearers, as sorcerers, as pilgrims, as sailors, as grooms, as pedlers, as nurses, as dumpling-hucksters, as publicans, as apprentices, as anything and everything that did not ape aristocracy or trespass upon the domain of the patrician, danced, for hour after hour, in a maze of graceful or grotesque movement, to the music of drum and flute. Many words might be squandered on at-

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tempts to describe these dances, so delightful to Japanese senses, but the impression conveyed must be at best a mere shadow of the reality. Sometimes the performers are tiny maidens, only seven or eight years old ; sometimes men of fifty or upwards are alone qualified. The *tanabata* dance on the 7th day of the seventh month, to celebrate the union of the Herdboy Prince and Weaver Princess is an example of the former. Each little lassie is dressed in strict conformity with a traditional model—a lofty coiffure, gay with pins of silver and tortoise shell ; a damask kerchief jauntily knotted on the forehead ; long sleeves tied into shoulder puffs with white satin cords ; a richly decorated satin robe with crimson under-garment ; a broad belt, embroidered and embossed with designs in gold and purple ; a miniature drum, gilt and silk-stringed, with lacquered drum-stick in the hands, and purple socks on the feet. Nurses, scarcely less picturesquely attired, and carrying bright-hued umbrellas with crane and tortoise patterns, accompany the little girls and take a subordinate part in the dance, during which the children sing

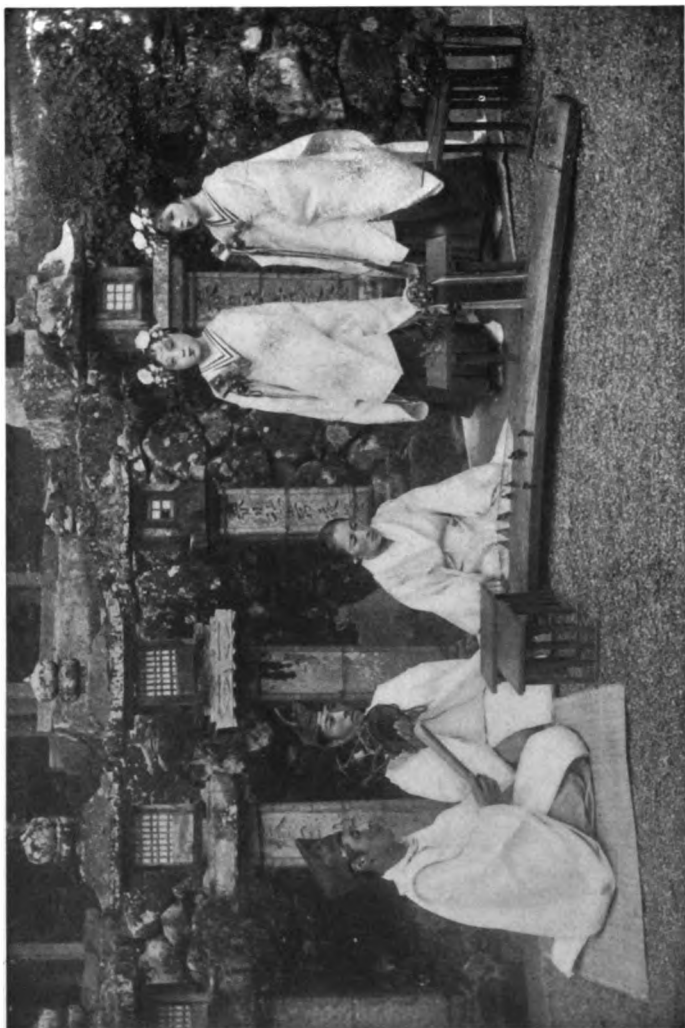
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a simple refrain in unison, and beat out the rhythm of their movements on their toy drums. The *gebon-odori* of Wakayama prefecture is a type of elders' dancing. Seventy or eighty merchants join in the performance. They put on hats adorned with artificial flowers; wear black surcoats over white body garments; carry gourds, umbrellas, gongs and drums, and recite a religious formula as they dance. Many provincial centres have dances peculiar to the locality, the motives of the performances showing endless variety, and the costumes being of the most fanciful character. We cannot attempt to describe these. They must be seen to be appreciated. We may add, however, that the songs chanted during the dances are innumerable. Generally the ideas are trivial, and the verselets owe their value to the cadence of their five-syllabled and seven-syllabled lines—a kind of metre scarcely capable of being musically reproduced in English words—and to the recurrence of similar sounds in different senses, rather than to the beauty or loftiness of the sentiments they embody. We append here three specimens, the



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On the 15th of the month of May, on, and last, got the opportunity of seeing the dances on their toy drums. The festival of Wakaïa in prefecture is a festival of the 15th of the month of May. Seventy or eighty men, women, and children, perform. They put on costumes of white, red, and black flowers; wear black hats, and carry a drum, a gong, a gong, and a gong. They recite a religious prayer, and then dance. Many provincial dances are peculiar to the locality, the costumes being of the most beautiful. We cannot attempt to describe them; they must be seen to be appreciated. It is odd, however, that the songs and dances are innumerable, and the verses are trivial, and the verses are of their five-syllabled or seven-syllabled lines—a kind of verse, capable of being musically reproduced in English words—and to the recurrence of the same sound in different senses, rather than to the beauty or loftiness of the sentiments they embody. We append here three specimens, the



OUT-OF-DOOR MUSIC AT NARA.

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first two translated from the repertoire of the *Bon* dances, the third from that of the "Flower Dance" of Bingo province :

I

Bon, Bon, with us yet,
To-day and to-morrow pass;
Bon, Bon, ere three suns set,
Dies like the dead grass,
Dead on the winter hill,
But Bon now is with us still.

With dead grass the altar wreath;
Overhead the red sun burns,
To peonies the dead grass turns,
Gazed at from beneath.

With dead grass the altar crown,
Silver-soft the moonlight gleams,
Flowers of ruth the dead grass seems
To spirits looking down.

Flowers of the peony
Bloom to pass away;
Bloom of the pity flower
Bides here but to-day.

II

If you go, beloved best,
Take me with you too;
(*Non noko sai sai.*)¹
To the east, to the west,
If only with you.
(*Yotte kono.*)¹

¹ Meaningless interjections thrown in by the musicians.

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Smile or frown, joy or care,
Snow or sunny weather,
Anywhere, everywhere,
Only together.
(*Suku naka choi choi.*)

III

If you want to meet me, love,
Only we twain,
Come to the gate, love,
Sunshine or rain ;
Stand in the shadow, love,
And if people pry,
Say that you came, love,
To watch who went by.¹

If you want to meet me, love,
Only we two,
Come to the tea-grove, love,
Moonlight and dew ;
Stand among the bushes, love.
And if passers see,
Say that you came, love,
To gather leaves of tea.

If you want to meet me, love,
Only you and I,
Come to the pine tree, love,
Clouds or clear sky ;
Stand among the spikelets, love,
And if folks ask why,
Say that you came, love,
To catch a butterfly.

¹ An allusion to a method of divining.

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The subject of dancing cannot be dismissed without reference to the classical mime of Japan, the *shin-gaku* of early eras, the *no* of mediæval and modern times. The *shin-gaku*, or sacred mime, represented in fragmentary form the dance of the deities before the cave of the sun goddess, and was included among the religious rites of the *Shinto* cult. A popular parody of this rite made its appearance in the seventh century and received the name of *san-gaku* or *saru-gaku*, the former a logically conceived term signifying "unorthodox mime," the latter obtained by cutting the ideograph *shin* (deity) into two and taking the right half only, which remnant was the character for the zodiacal monkey (*saru*). It is curious that the subtle sarcasm of the latter process and the slur thus cast upon the *Shinto* observance by its vulgarisation should have synchronised with the government's resolve to patronise Buddhism. Japanese history draws no inference from these coincidences, but Japanese history never analyses. The sacred dance having been thus degraded to the antics employed by a jester for emphasising his wit, and the light heart of the people respond-

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ing readily to the innovation, there grew up the bucolic dances (*den-gaku*), briefly described above, which partook of the nature of supplications or thanksgivings to the deities in connection with agricultural pursuits. Buddhist priests now began to interest themselves in a custom which could not be ignored without impairing the popularity of their creed, and whenever Buddhism laid its hand upon anything Japanese, Chinese influences were imparted by the touch. During the Muro-machi and Kamakura epochs, that is to say, during the years when military feudalism overshadowed the throne in Kyoto itself, and the days when it had a separate stronghold at Kamakura, the histrionic art in China reached a high stage of development. The seven passions, of which philosophy forbade all exhibition in every-day life, found an appropriate field for display on the stage of the theatre, and pictures from mythical, historical and biographical galleries were presented to popular gaze in a fine setting of spectacular accessories. The Buddhist priests translated the spirit of this entertainment to Japan, and having purged it of its purely theatrical features, grafted

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it on the bucolic dance, which thus sprang into aristocratic favour and was gradually enriched with a repertoire of songs embodying Buddhist precepts as well as poetical fancies. By degrees, however, its *Shinto* rival, the *saru-gaku*, began to raise its head, and in the middle of the fourteenth century an open-air performance at one of the bridges in Kyoto on the occasion of an Imperial progress restored the ancient dance to official patronage. A notable innovation had, in fact, been introduced: masks were worn by the dancers, and the potentialities of the change were so clearly appreciated that soon no less than sixty-six varieties of masks received the cachet of experts, and the dance rapidly became fashionable among aristocrats, who, without the disguise of the mask, would have hesitated to take part in such a pastime. There were of course persons who devoted their lives to studying the art; a title (*ta-in*) was conferred upon experts of special skill, and by degrees, under the encouragement of court patronage and the refining influence of Buddhism, which ultimately invaded this sphere also, as it had already invaded that of the *den-*

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gaku, a great variety of mimetic dances was evolved. There is a lengthy and intricate history connected with the evolution of these *no* dances as they were generically called, but were it set forth here readers would emerge from the study with only a vague impression of bewildering nomenclature. Some interest, however, attaches to the fact that as early as the fifteenth century a special kind of *no* (*kanjin-no*, or the mercy-promoting *no*) became the prototype of the charity concert of modern Europe and America. The immediate object was to collect funds for the great Buddhist festival of Gion in Kyoto,—described in a previous chapter,—and among the audience that honoured the performance were representatives of all the aristocratic classes, from princes of the blood to men at arms. This idea found such favour that from having been originally a prelude to a *fête*, the *no* itself became a *fête*, and in the prosperous days of the Tokugawa Regency a monthly performance of *kanjin-no* took place in Yedo. Two large stages were set up, one in the west of the city (at *Shiba-guchi*), the other in the east (at *Asakusa*), and upon the

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nobles residing in the military capital devolved the duty of providing dancers and accessories; a sufficiently onerous duty, seeing that the performance of the *kanjin-no* when at the zenith of its popularity lasted for fifteen days, that the costumes were of the most magnificent and expensive character, and that the display was expected to be on a scale sufficiently grand to compensate for the absence of all other sources of public entertainment, these being officially interdicted while the *no* was on the stage. To one variety of the dance (called *issei-ichidai kanjin-no*, or “one-life-one-generation”) such honour attached that once only in a generation might it be presented to the public, and history shows that during two hundred years the citizens of Yedo had but eight opportunities of witnessing this greatest of mimetic spectacles. Much might also be written about the *no-kyogen*, which, though in reality a species of comic dance intended to occupy the interlude of the *no* proper, has now come to be erroneously regarded — especially by foreigners — as the general type of the *no*; about the *sensuke-no*, which takes its name from a coura-

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geous innovator who ventured to degrade the dance by placing it upon the boards of the theatre, then (1830) an institution utterly tabooed by the aristocracy; about the *teruha-kyogen*, a modification due to the light fancy of a lady who fitted the fashionable songs of her era (1845) to the elaborate pantomime of the *no*; about the temporary decadence of the *no* at the fall of feudalism and about its vigorous revival in recent times. But such topics belong to a monograph rather than to the cursory notice for which alone we can find space here. The *no* is perhaps the most essentially Japanese thing in Japan. It has been likened to the old Greek drama because of the respect, not prescribed but instinctive, paid to the three unities, the assistance of a chorus, the stately demeanour of the masked actors, the open-air amphitheatre and the semi-religious element pervading the performance. The likeness, though certainly traceable, is purely accidental. Japanese taste has alone presided over the development of the *no*, and the power with which the spectacle of this peculiarly refined and classical drama appeals to the art instinct of the Japanese



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the *kyōka* who ventured to degrade the *kyōka* by putting it upon the boards of the theatre in 1830 in an institution utterly tabooed by the *shōgun*; about the *terabu-kyōgen*, a popular comedy due to the light fancy of a lady who lived in the Edo era; about the songs of *Iwano* (1845) to the *kyōka*; about the performance of the *no*; about the decline of the *no* at the fall of the Edo era; about its vigorous revival in recent times.

But such topics belong to a monograph rather than to the cursory notice for which alone I am here permitted to speak. The *no* is perhaps the most thoroughly Japanese thing in Japan. It has been compared to the old Greek drama because of its simplicity, not prescribed but instinctive, paid to the three unities, the assistance of a chorus, the stately demeanour of the masked actors, the open-air amphitheatre and the semi-religious element pervading the performance. The likeness, though certainly traceable, is purely accidental. Japanese taste has alone presided over the development of the *no*, and the power with which the spectacle of this peculiarly refined and classical drama appeals to the art instinct of the Japanese



A GEISHA PLAYING SAMISEN.

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may be appreciated from the fact that they will sit from morning to evening watching with rapt attention performances which for all the splendour of the actors' costumes, the intensity of some of the situations and the combined grace and force of the motions, soon become inexpressibly tedious to the foreign spectator.

Any allusion to Japanese dancing immediately recalls to the memory of foreigners familiar with Japan the image of a girl exquisitely refined in all her ways; her costume a *chef-d'œuvre* of decorative art; her looks demure, yet arch; her manners restful and self-contained, yet sunny and winsome; her movements gentle and unobtrusive, but musically graceful; her conversation a piquant mixture of feminine inconsequence and sparkling repartee; her repertoire of light accomplishments inexhaustible; her subjective modesty a model, and her objective complacency unmeasured. Such is the *geisha*, written about, sung about and raved about by travellers whom this novel combination of fair sweetness and sordid frailty has moved to a rapture of bewildered admiration, and by "old residents"

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whose senses, however *blasé*, however racially intolerant, never become impervious to her abstract attractions. She is generally spoken of as a *danseuse*, but dancing, though it figures largely in her training, and though her skill in it doubtless contributes much to her graces of movement, constitutes only a minor part of her professional *rôle*. She has, in fact, no counterpart outside Japan; for while she is a mistress of all seductive arts, seduction is not necessarily her trade; and whereas she never forgets to be a lady, she takes care never to be mistaken for one. Originally—and in her case we cannot go back further than the year 1681—she was simply a dancing child (*odori-ko*), whose trade was to perform in great folks' mansions on festive occasions, and who never degraded herself by accepting an invitation to restaurants or tea-houses. But by and by (1689) the law recognised her as a demoralising influence in military society, and feudal nobles were forbidden to make her a feature at their feasts. Thus, relegated to the places of public resort which she had hitherto eschewed, she lost

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caste and character, nor was it until the close of the eighteenth century that she again obtained admittance to aristocratic dwellings. In notifications issued thereafter from time to time we can easily trace the vain efforts of officialdom to limit the range of her charms. The keeping of *odori-ko* now (1800) became a trade. Instead of living with her parents or guardians, a girl, still in her tender youth, was intrusted to a *geisha-ya* (*geisha* house), and there, with three or four companions, received training in all the accomplishments necessary to the successful practice of her profession. There, also, she lived for a fixed term of years somewhat after the manner of an apprentice, her family being paid at the outset a sum of money (*minoshiro-kin*) which greatly resembled a purchase price, and her earnings after she had made her *début* being divided in exceedingly unequal proportions between her employer and herself. From ten to twenty *yen* was — and is — the amount of compensation given to parents in consideration of their binding their child to a *geisha-ya* for a period of from seven to ten years,

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but that outlay represents only a fraction of the expenses subsequently incurred by the employer in training the girl and providing rich costumes for her use. From the age of about ten or eleven she begins to do duty as an *o-shaku*, or cup-bearer, and at sixteen or seventeen she becomes what is technically called *ippon*, a term literally meaning "one stick." The reference here is to the fact that the *geisha's* honorarium is euphemistically measured, not by the flight of vulgar hours, but by the burning of fragrant incense. For the time occupied in burning one stick of incense she receives twenty-five *sen*, whereas the *o-shaku* receives only one half of that amount. The fact is twenty-five *sen* an hour, but the fashion of the incense fiction is scrupulously observed. It is chiefly during the "cup-bearer" period of her career that the *geisha* dances. When she reaches the *ippon* stage she makes music for her little successors of the *o-shaku* rank; plays accompaniments for the songs of the convives; sings to them herself; becomes their *vis-à-vis* in the game of *ken* or *nanko* or some other pastime; laughs merrily

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at their slenderest joke, and caps it with some bright conceit of her own; dances, if required, with a certain display of pretty protest; carries in and out the lacquered trays of edibles, and throws over the whole entertainment a glamour of grace, sunshine and maiden mystery, without the least *soupçon* of indelicacy so far as her own initiative is concerned. It must be plainly recorded, indeed, that in purely Japanese circles the *geisha* is essentially a refining influence, and that if she errs and leads others into error—as she undoubtedly does—her trespasses are carefully concealed from public gaze. Her twenty-five *sen* an hour is not pay or wage or consideration or any other common kind of earning: it is the “honourable congratulation” (*o-shugi*). She receives in addition an “honourable flower” (*o-hana*), which varies according to the mood of her employer, but is never less than a *yen*. A statistician might infer from these figures that five hours of “congratulation” plus a “flower”—or, say, a hundred and ten gold cents—represents an excellent daily average. But when a *geisha* is in vogue she has invitations to

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“present her face” at many reunions on the same day, and even half an hour’s act of presence entitles her to “one stick of incense” and one “flower.” Thus she earns hundreds, not tens, of *yen* monthly. Then there is the gold that she picks up on the by-ways of her profession. She may tread them lawfully by purchasing a special license in addition to her *geisha* ticket, or she may follow them in secrecy and danger. Let it be enough to say that she exploits this mine of wealth to its extreme capacity, but without ever overstepping the limits of feminine reserve. She plays all the time for her own hand. Her quest is a lover sufficiently devoted to remove her from a professional career into private life. If she has been but a pale little star on the public horizon, this process of “redemption” is cheap. But if she has become a luminary, the compensation demanded by her employer for the loss of her services is often very large.

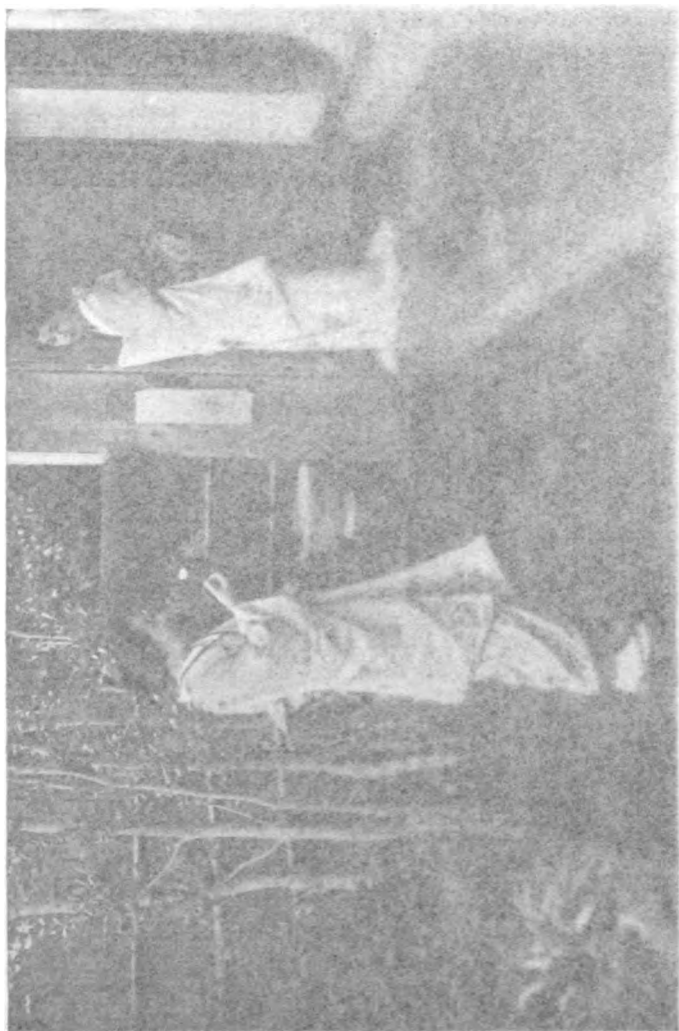
In this context we naturally arrive at a problem which our pledge to our readers compels us to discuss, and which, indeed, deserves

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some comment, if only for the sake of correcting the very false impressions that have been created by imperfectly informed critics. It has been shown in a previous chapter that the sale of human beings found a place among the transactions of Japanese trade from very ancient times, and that, though the dimensions of the practice varied at different epochs, prohibitive legislation never succeeded in stamping it out. From that source the ranks of the "priestesses of humanity" were chiefly recruited. We need not pause here to analyse the causes which chiefly contributed to the growth of the social evil in Japan. It may be supposed that, the family being regarded by the Confucian system of ethics as the very pivot of the State, a powerful motive must have operated to preserve the domestic circle against the incursions of irregular passion. It may also be supposed that, since the military structure of Japanese society did not adapt itself to permanent marital obligations, ephemeral agents of indulgence must have been in large demand. Both hypotheses are correct in a measure, but it would be wrong to

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infer either that an instinctive desire to maintain the purity of family life imparted moral sanction to extra-matrimonial irregularities, or that the *Samurai's* prudent and often necessary abstention from marriage ties created exceptional facilities for less embarrassing relations. As to the former point, we shall probably be nearer the truth if we say that, essentially as the Japanese character differs from the usually defined Oriental type, it certainly includes an element of resignation which has no affinity with the stubborn resistance offered in the Occident even to ills that are recognised as inevitable. The Japanese long ago perceived that the natural force of certain appetites far exceeds the requirements of human well being or happiness, and instead of setting themselves to redress this hopelessly disturbed equilibrium, they preferred to accept the fact and to subject its consequences to official control. It is unnecessary to seek more recondite causes for the growth and licensing of the social evil in Japan. Neither have we to discuss the great question whether to endue virtue with vicarious respect by the



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the Japanese have an instinctive desire to maintain the order and regularity of family life imparted moral training to the young, and to avoid matrimonial irregularities, or at least to make such as are prudent and often necessary adjustments in the most unobtrusive manner. The marriage ties created exceptional relations, and the less embarrassing relations. As to the Japanese point, we shall probably be nearer the truth if we say that, essentially as the Japanese type differs from the usually defined Occidental type, it certainly includes an element of passion which has no affinity with the restraint usually offered in the Occident even in those cases that are recognised as inevitable. The Japanese long ago perceived that the natural intensity of certain appetites far exceeds the requirements of human well being or happiness, and instead of setting themselves to redress this grossly disturbed equilibrium, they preferred to accept the fact and to subject its consequences to official control. It is unnecessary to look for more recondite causes for the growth and increase of the social evil in Japan. Neither have we to discuss the great question whether to caduce virtue with vicarious respect by the



AN INFORMAL VISIT.

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uncompromising and inefficient stigmatisation of vice, atones adequately for a consequent failure to check the ravages of the most terrible physical scourge that afflicts mankind. That is a problem inviting world-wide solution. The Japanese view of it is the view of continental Europe: they license prostitution. They proceed, also, a step farther than continental Europe, for they banish all the priestesses and paraphernalia of the vice to remote quarters of their cities, and enforce this ostracism with such successful rigour that the remaining quarters are absolutely free from any evidence of the evil. It has often been urged by the advocates of the non-licensing system that the ban which drives into obscurity every manifestation of the sensual passions is specially potent to diminish their indulgence. The Japanese licensing system certainly achieves that end so far as the vast bulk of the population is concerned. On the other hand, within the prescribed quarters no attempt is made to limit the resources of temptation. The unfortunate women, tricked out in rich costumes and splendid

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coiffures, sit ranged on a kind of proscenium, separated from the street by a widely latticed partition through which passers-by can gaze without obstruction. It is this feature of the system that chiefly shocks the foreign observer. Exceptional moral obtuseness is suggested by its crude practicality, and it seems to inflict harsh degradation on the woman for the sake of catering to the convenience and, perhaps, appealing to the imagination of the libertine. Arraigned upon that charge, the Japanese reply first, that when a man's depraved impulses have led him as far as these remote haunts of vice, little deference need be paid to his small remnants of virtue; secondly, that by granting licenses the law constructively recognises the holders' right to ply their trade in whatever manner appears most convenient within the prescribed limits; and, thirdly, that to soften the hardships of the courtesan's lot may be a suggestion of mercy, but certainly is not an obligation of morality. We state the Japanese case without attempting to pass judgment on its merits. But no one can ignore that the sentence of absolute ostrac-

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cism and banishment pronounced against the courtesan in Japan, so long as she pursues her evil trade, ought to have a strongly deterrent effect. She is irrevocably exiled, not 'merely from the society of virtuous people, but even from the vicinity of their habitations and from the places where they congregate for business or for pleasure. She lives in a species of convict settlement, scarcely ever emerging from the precincts of her prison during her term of service, and never suffered for a moment to forget the degradation into which she has sold herself. Her manner of adopting a career of shame constitutes an additional dissuasion. It is always a matter of sale. In consideration of a certain sum paid to her family, she pledges herself to serve as a *yu-jo* (*fille de joie*) for a fixed term of years. Such transactions seem to differ little from slave traffic. They appear to perpetuate the old customs referred to in a previous chapter. The law, however, actively endeavours to avert their worst abuses.¹ It is enacted that

¹ The Government of the Restoration (1867) distinguished itself by drastic legislation against transactions that pledged women to a life of shame. It issued a law dissolving, without reserve, all existing covenants

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a girl must have attained the full age of sixteen before her consent can be accounted legal ; that she and her parents or guardians must attend at the office of the *police de mœurs* and signify their united desire to enter into the proposed agreement ; that the circumstances of the career she is choosing must then and there be fully explained to her, after which a week's interval must be allowed for her to reconsider her purpose ; and that the service she undertakes must be recognised as absolutely terminable by her own free choice at any moment. This last and most important condition is generally overlooked by foreign critics. They imagine that the law sanctions an arrangement by which a girl of tender years is consigned irrevocably to a life of shame and misery, whereas the truth is that the payer of the *mundium* acquires no right enforce-

of that nature and annulling any monetary obligations connected with them. It proclaimed that all capital invested in immoral enterprises should be treated as stolen, and that, since prostitutes and *goisha* had dehumanised themselves, moneys due by them, or by others on their account, could not be recovered ; and it prescribed severe penalties for any attempt to bind a girl to degrading service. But that passion of reform was soon cooled by contact with conditions that have proved too strong for legislation in all ages, and the statesmen of Japan, finding they could not eradicate the evil, adopted the wiser course of regulating it.

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able in opposition to the girl's volition, and cannot recover possession of her person if she quits his service. But though the law withholds all recognition of the principle of coercion, there can be no doubt that, for practical purposes, the girl is coerced. The obligation that dictated her original sacrifice remains valid until the completion of the service for which she has contracted. To abandon that service prematurely means that her family become liable for the money they received from her employer at the outset. Another obstacle usually stands between the *yu-jo* and the recovery of her freedom. Things are so managed that she can scarcely avoid contracting debts on account of her wardrobe, and these debts often compel her to accept a fresh term of degradation. Even in such a career ranks and distinctions are contrived, to rouse ambition and encourage extravagance, so that, once entangled in the meshes of shame, escape is cruelly difficult. It has been alleged by slanderers of Japanese ethics that to have been a *geisha* or a *yu-jo* is not a disqualifying prelude to respectable marriage. There is no truth in

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the statement. The delirium of passion is responsible for offences against social canons in Japan as in Europe, and during the period of general levelling and confusion that immediately succeeded the fall of feudalism, traditions and conventionalities were sometimes neglected. But, for the rest, the antecedents of a wife are, and have always been, scrutinised just as closely in this section of the far East as in any Western country. The most unsightly feature of the whole system is the part played by parents and guardians in consigning their daughters or relatives to such a life. Where the promptings of filial duty possess almost the force of law, recourse to them may well take the character of coercion. There is no doubt that the Japanese daughter's estimate of her individual rights weighs little against her sense of family obligations, and that, on the other hand, her parents take a greatly exaggerated view of the obedience she owes them. Disciples of Western civilisation cannot choose but condemn such ethics in the most unequivocal terms. It should be distinctly understood, however, that only the pres-

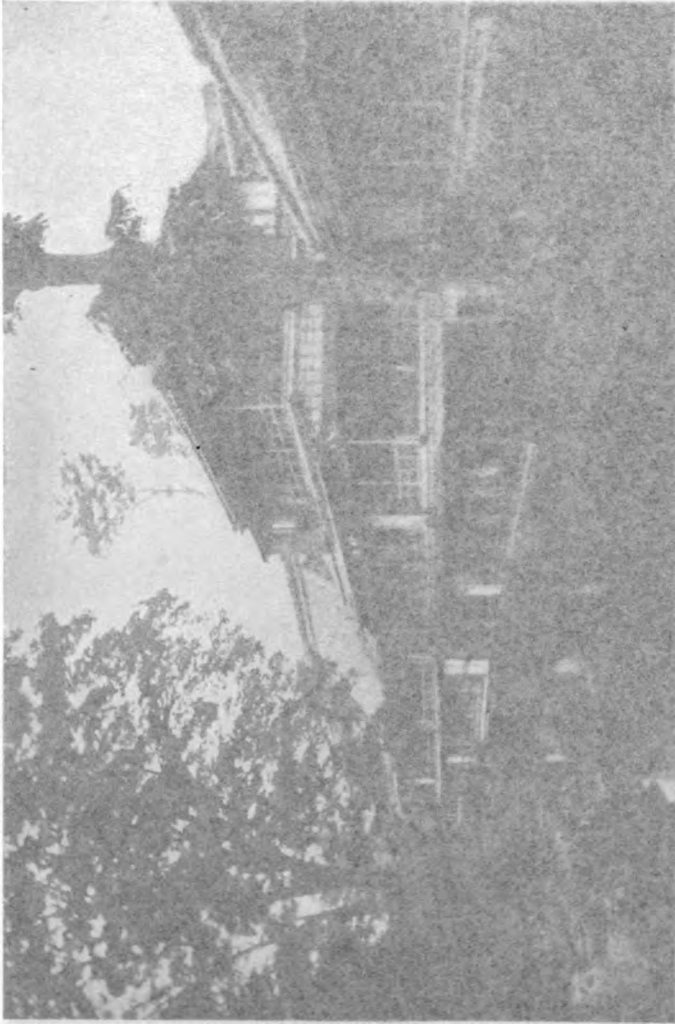
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sure of dire necessity is held to justify the sacrifice of a girl's person. The act is counted a misery by those who have recourse to it, and evokes the profound pity of friends and relatives. There are no purely voluntary victims. No one adopts the career if any possible alternative offers, and that fact must be placed to the credit either of the system itself or of the morality of Japanese women. One of the aspirations of modern Japanese reformers used to be the abolition of licensed prostitution. But it never appeared that they had studied the subject by the light of ethical philosophy, and the public declined to take them seriously.

Reverting to our story of the year's *fêtes*, we find ourselves in the eighth month of the old calendar, approximately the ninth of the new. This is essentially the dead season. In the times of the Tokugawa *Shoguns*, Yedo was required to hold a grand festival in commemoration of the fact that Ieyasu, the great founder of the Shogunate, made his official entry into the city on the 1st of the eighth month. But the Tokyo of to-day eschews all acknowledg-

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ment of the fact that it was once the capital of the *Shoguns*, and in September pays homage to the moon day only. There is a Japanese saying that in spring the moonbeams lose themselves among the blossoms; in summer their image reflected from the water is more beautiful than the original; in winter they have an air of desolation; only in autumn is their charm perfect and unmixed. Hence on the 15th of the eighth month, and the 13th of the ninth, parties are formed to admire the moon; verses are composed in her praise, and in each house a table is set, bearing offerings of *saké*, rice dumplings, potatoes, chestnuts, persimmons and pears. This custom, however, like so many of the people's traditional habits, is gradually falling into disuse. In the great cities, Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto, it has lost much of its romantic and poetic character, but its vogue is likely to be preserved by climatic and commercial influences. The delightful freshness of early autumn nights renders the moon *fête* a welcome excuse to the heat-weary citizens for an evening on the water, and owners of river-side restaurants and pleasure



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It is said that it was once the capital of the world, and that in September pays homage to the moon. There is a Japanese saying that in spring the moonbeams lose themselves in the blossoms; in summer their image is reflected in the water is more beautiful than in spring; in winter they have an air of loneliness; only in autumn is their charm perfectly appreciated. Hence on the 15th of the eighth month, and the 13th of the ninth, parties are held to admire the moon: verses are composed in her praise, and in each house a table is set with offerings of *saké*, rice dumplings, persimmons, pomegranates, persimmons and pears. This custom, however, like so many of the people's traditional habits, is gradually falling into disuse. In the great cities, Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto, it has lost much of its romantic and poetic character, but its voice is likely to be preserved by the civil and commercial influences. The delightful prospect of early autumn nights renders the custom *jiû* a welcome excuse to the heat-weary towns for an evening on the water, and a visit to the riverside restaurants and pleasure



OJI TEA HOUSE, TOKYO.

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boats contribute industriously to the people's love of these Venetian entertainments. The water of Kyoto, celebrated for its purity and bleaching properties, comes to the city in little rivulets, and the so-called Kamo River is but a paltry stream trickling seaward over a wide bed of gravel-banks and bowlders. But the make-believe faculty with which the Japanese are richly endowed, invests this arid area with all the properties of a broad-bosomed river, and the people sup there under the moonlight as contentedly as though cool currents were rippling around them, and the breath of cataracts fanning their faces. Osaka citizens, happier in the possession of the Yodo River, which, taking its way direct from the great lake of Biwa, sweeps generously but gently through their streets, spend much of their summer-evening life floating on the water amid the flashing of fireworks and the twanging of *samisens*. But though, owing to the much greater size of the Sumida River, and the configuration of the streets, these water picnics are less in evidence in Tokyo than in Osaka, they are in reality more affected. The

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citizen's ideal of summer pleasure is to hire a *yane-bune*,¹ engage two or three *geisha*, and travel lazily up stream with scull or sail, debarking at one of the many famous restaurants that line both banks of the river, whence he drifts home after dinner along the path of the moonbeams, merry, musical and perhaps lovesick. These delights culminate at a *fête* called the "river opening" (*kawa-biraki*), which takes place nominally on "moon night" in August. Those for whom the *fête* is organised contribute nothing to the preparations. All that part of the affair is undertaken by the river-side restaurants and boathouse keepers, who, for the sake of the throng of customers that the celebration brings, put up a considerable sum to purchase fireworks. It is an excellent speculation. The river in the vicinity of the Ryogoku bridge, the central point of Bohemian Tokyo, is usually thronged with boats from bank to bank, and every water-side chamber has its party of guests, who pay ample

¹ A boat of which the middle part is covered by a roof (*yane*) under which the pleasure-seekers sit. The space between the pillars that support the roof may be either closed with sliding windows of paper and glass, or left completely open.

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prices for scanty accommodation. It is easy to conceive what a feature the *geisha* constitutes on these occasions—a girl with all the daintiest graces of person and costume; all the gentle refinements of virtuous womanhood; all the accomplishments of expert training, and all the attractions of vague morality. She is a Japanese invention and a Japanese specialty.

In autumn the chrysanthemum becomes the centre of attraction. The Japanese were once able to claim the premiership of the world as cultivators of this flower, but their pride of place has been usurped by Western horticulturists. Still the chrysanthemum, their Imperial flower, the Emperor's crest and the nucleus of hundreds of exquisite decorative designs, is far more to them than to any European people. They delight in its quaintly named varieties,—the “jewel of the inner court,” the “autumn amulet,” the “ten-fingered-ten-eyed flower,” the “snow of the pear bloom,” the “sleep of the hoary tiger,” the “moon-touched blossom,” the “crystal palace,” the “five-lake hoarfrost,” the “three-treasure petal” and so on. They delight

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in the wonder of the blossom's dishevelled symmetry so characteristic of the equipoise and irregularity of their own decorative art. They delight in the wealth of bloom that careful nursing can produce,—as many as from thirteen hundred to sixteen hundred flowers on a single plant,—and they delight in the ingenuity of public gardeners who mould masses of blossoms and greenery into historical and mythological tableaux which even the country bumpkin and the city *gamin* are not too ignorant to appreciate. It appears that a banquet in honour of the chrysanthemum used to be one of the regular observances at the Imperial Court in ancient times, and that, at a later era, when the Tokugawa ruled in Yedo (Tokyo), the ladies of the palace there were accustomed to engage in a species of competition, each procuring a chrysanthemum blossom, the choicest of which was selected for presentation to the *Shogun's* consort, rich rewards and great *éclat* accruing, of course, to the owner of the "victor flower." All these old fashions have now been merged in a garden party of Occidental type. At one of

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the Emperor's detached palaces in Tokyo numerous chrysanthemum plants of the finest and rarest kinds are cultivated, and during three days in October the park is thrown open to the aristocratic and official classes, the Emperor and Empress themselves appearing among their guests on the first day,—a great occasion for “globe-trotters,” who, by the good offices of their country's representative, can generally procure an invitation. The resident foreigner is seldom so fortunate, unless he be in the service of the government or the recipient of a high-class Japanese decoration, but to be a stranger is to have a warrant of welcome.

Common to all seasons and essentially Japanese in their origin as well as in their developments, are performances held nightly at a species of public hall called *yose-seki*, or, in every-day parlance, *yose*. The most respectable of these entertainments is the *kōdan*, or historical narrative, known until recent years under the name of *gundan* (war story). In old-time Japan the life of the aristocrat and his doings lay entirely beyond the close scrutiny of every one outside the

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military class, that is to say, entirely beyond the scrutiny of fully nine-tenths of the nation. The warlike motives and methods of the patrician remained always a mystery to the commoner. Such a state of affairs would certainly have resulted in the growth of a large school of historical romancists had the pen enjoyed any freedom. But the exclusiveness of the *Samurai* asserted itself as sharply in the domain of literature as in that of society, and although records of military incidents were compiled from time to time, they never rose above skeleton narratives without a breath of animation to stir their dry bones. To Buddhist priests is due the initiative in a movement which ultimately became a useful means of familiarising the masses with the salient events of their country's history. The priests, however, had no such purpose at the outset. The new *rôle* that they struck out, in the early years of the fourteenth century, aimed solely at opening to Japanese aristocrats the pages of China's warlike annals. Alike in literature and in the art of war the Buddhist friars of mediæval Japan were the repositories of knowledge, the great majority

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of the *Samurai* knowing only how to fight. Thus there occurred to a learned abbot (Genkei) the idea, of critically expounding the military classics of the Middle Kingdom to patrician audiences at the Imperial Court, and the innovation attracted wide favour and patronage.

More than two hundred and fifty years elapsed, however, before a popular character was given to these lectures. A *Samurai* (Goto Matabei Mototsugu), who had himself figured conspicuously in the warlike pageant of his time but had fallen into a state of poverty, took his stand one day within the enclosure of the Temma Tenjin temple in Kyoto at a time of festival, and, as a bread-earning resource, entertained the worshippers with vivid accounts of the scenes in which he had borne a part. He quickly found an enthusiastic audience, as well as numerous imitators among the *ronin*, or soldiers of fortune, who, not owing allegiance to any feudal chief, and being without a fixed source of income, were glad to turn their hands to any profitable pursuit that did not involve a connection with vulgar trade. Gradually, by steps which we need

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not trace, these *raconteurs* (*koshaku-shi*) became a recognised class; established halls (*yose*) for delivering their narratives or readings; divided themselves into various schools distinguished by special oratorical methods; devoted their whole lives to the cultivation of their art, and developed a style to which the possession of very high merits must be conceded. Nothing could be simpler than the method of these experts. Seated on the mats before a species of lectern and armed with a fan and a small flat baton of paper, the *koshaku-shi* carries his audience with him through scenes where all the passions that sway humanity are portrayed with admirable force and fidelity. Petty adjuncts as the fan and the paper baton seem, the uses that they serve are extensive. A hesitating poise of the half-opened fan introduces the audience at once to some mood of coyness or expectancy; a graceful sweep of its full-spread surface invokes the presence of summer airs, moonlight dancers or stately ladies; the sharp snap of its suddenly folded ribs suggests fateful resolve or exhausted patience; now its crescent rises slowly in unison

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with the growth of some sound of menace or the march of some disaster's prelude; now it sinks as hope dies or the power of resistance fades from some hero's arm in mortal peril; and when the tale begins to climb to a crisis, the baton beats out a swift sharp note of warning on the wooden lectern, its startled raps growing quicker as incident crowds upon incident, until the rush and rattle of the armed combat, the din and confusion of the *mêlée*, the crash of the catastrophe, seem to be actually reproduced before the eyes of the audience.

The *koshaku-shi* uses no book. The stories that he has to tell are not fully recorded in any public document, nor can absolute historical accuracy be claimed for them. The figures that move through the drama and the cardinal incidents are historical; all the environment is in accurate consonance with the customs of the epoch; but the skill of the *raconteur* or of his predecessors—for these tales are handed down as family heirlooms—adds a large margin of the picturesque, the sensational and the imaginary. Yet there can be no doubt about the service

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these men render in familiarising the masses with the characters and events of the national history, as well as with the social, administrative and military canons of bygone ages. The magnitude of the educational work they accomplish may be inferred when we say that in Tokyo alone they number over three hundred, divided into twelve schools, each tracing its origin to some celebrated expert, the originator of a special style, and that their repertoire of subjects includes eight sections — accounts of commotions raised by treacherous clansmen in feudal families; accounts of momentous local interferences by the central administration; accounts of vendettas; accounts of famous judicial decisions; biographies of renowned heroes; lives of redressers of popular wrongs; journalistic records, and critical *résumés* of contemporary events.¹

¹ The remuneration earned by the *koshaku-shi* is small. There are three classes, distinguished by degrees of skill. A third-class expert receives one *rin* per head of audience. Hence two hundred hearers, a good "house," means 20 *sen* (10 cents gold). A first-class performer is entitled to ten times that amount. Thus his attendance at a *yoss* generally brings him a dollar (gold). He may give a *koshaku* at two or even three *yoss* daily, and he is often invited to social reunions, when his *guerdon* varies from a dollar and a half to four or even five dollars. But there are not more than ten masters in all Japan whose reputation secures lucrative private patronage.

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A rival or colleague of the *koshaku-shi* is the “talker” (*hanashi-ka*), or “fugitive-words-man” (*rakugo-ka*), who differs from the *raconteur* only in the lighter character of the subjects he chooses and in the prominence that he gives to the humorous side of his performance. The founder of this school (Anrakuan Shakuden, originally called Hirabayashi Heidayu) does not belong to a very remote era (1600 A. D.) and is remembered now chiefly for the sake of eight volumes of wit and humour, the first of their kind, compiled by him at the age of seventy. Society had opened its arms to him as a master of the curious dilettanteism known as *cha-no-yu* (the tea clubs’ cult) before it recognised him as a humourist, but in the end the most stately circles of aristocrats resigned themselves to laugh with him, and with a scarcely less celebrated contemporary whose extemporised songs suggested or supplemented the wit of the master. Succeeding generations did not neglect these models. Not merely an exceptional fund of humour and large powers of mimicry, but also considerable erudition were needed for the successful pursuit of the *rakugo-ka*’s career, and though it formerly ranked

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below that of the *koshaku-shi*, the differentiation is scarcely perceptible in modern times. Often its votaries are broken-down gentlemen whose excesses have exhausted their fortunes, but much oftener they are men of no mean literary capacity who can weave the events of their time into narratives where tragedy and comedy play equally artistic parts. For the rest, what has been written above about the *koshaku-shi*'s earnings and his performance applies equally to the *rakugo-ka*. But the latter takes his subjects from the realm of romance or every-day life and does not seek to inspire his audience with any higher sentiments than sympathy and merriment. It would be difficult to decide whether he or the *koshaku-shi* is the greater artist. Both are certainly great, and each is without parallel in any other country.¹

To speak of a *yose* as a "hall" is to suggest a somewhat exaggerated idea of its quality and arrangements. A ruder or more comfortless place could scarcely be conceived — the building rough and totally undecorated, the floor covered with

¹ The *rakugo-ka* uses a fan only at his performance. He is not provided with the paper baton (*hari*) of the *koshaku-shi*. This trifling difference is nevertheless characteristic.

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mats but not divided into compartments, the gallery equally without redeeming feature except a semblance of privacy, the dais for the performers slightly elevated but entirely without ornamentation or scenic background. Such is the *yose*. A visitor, whatever his degree, pays an entrance fee varying from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 *sen*, makes a further disbursement of half a *sen* for the hire of a cushion, and thus equipped seats himself wherever he can find floor-space. If the weather be cold he spends a *sen* and a half on a brazier to be laid beside his cushion, and it still remains possible to squander the same sum on a pot of tea and a tiny drinking-cup, though economical folks find tea at one *sen* sufficiently palatable. Thus a total outlay of $9\frac{1}{2}$ *sen* may be compassed, the return for which is from three to four hours' entertainment. The *raconteur* and the humourist are not the only performers. There are also experts in recitative (*jōruri*),¹ in juggling, in puppet playing and sometimes in

¹ "Jōruri" is the name of a lady of the twelfth century whose very sad love adventures were recorded in a species of twelve-act dramatic tale. A modification of this kind of performance, partly singing, partly recitative and always accompanied by the *samisen*, is called *gidayu*, a name without significance for Western readers.

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dancing or music. The *jōruri* is a dramatic solo, chanted and recited with accompaniment of *samisen*. Modulation of the voice is skilfully made to suit changes of character, but for the rest no histrionic or mimetic effects are attempted. Female experts often acquire fame in this line. Being required, however, to simulate masculine tones, their performance sounds harsh and unnatural to foreign ears. The *jōruri* has its educational uses: it constructs its libretto from the tragedies of national and feudal history and familiarises the people with names and events that would otherwise lie entirely beyond the range of their reading or traditions. In Kyoto and Osaka its heroes and heroines are frequently represented by puppets, finely modelled and tricked out in panoply of camp or costume of court, all details strictly faithful to the fashions of the era. But Tokyo has never excelled in the manufacture of movable puppets. Its plastic specialty lies in the modelling of clay figures, galleries of which grouped to represent historical celebrities at crises of their careers may always be seen in the *sen* shows at Asakusa under the shadow of the temple of the goddess of mercy,

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“the wax-works of Asakusa ” as Anglo-Saxons are wont to call them.

In Tokyo alone there are a hundred and eighty *yose*. The law gives itself little concern about them, except to interdict any displays injurious to public morals and to post a supervising constable in each hall. They accommodate a total of about forty thousand people, and if each had a full audience the aggregate expenditure on account of entrance fees, cushion hire, brazier borrowing and tea-drinking would be some twelve hundred American dollars a night. So cheaply do the citizens of the Japanese capital take their pleasure.

Far older than any of the arts practised at the *yose* is the sport of wrestling (*sumotori*). It is supposed to date from the first century before the Christian era, and since not even the advent of Western civilisation in modern times has interrupted its career of popularity, the Japanese are accustomed to speak of it as an institution nineteen centuries old. But tradition is here more fond than faithful. That a wrestling bout of historical fame took place during the

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reign of the Emperor Suijin (24 B. C.) is probably as credible as any event referred to the semi-fabulous eras preceding the advent of ideographs. The story says that the custom of those days was to organise a palace-guard from soldiers of eminent thews, and that among the officers of the guard one Kehaya (or Kuehaya) showed himself invincibly muscular and overbearingly arrogant. The Emperor, hoping to find a match for this truculent swaggerer, ordered a levy of the strongest men in the realm, among whom came a certain Sukune. He challenged the bully, overthrew him, trampled him to death, and received for reward a wide estate at Tajima in Yamato province. Tradition dates the science of wrestling from that event, and gives to Sukune the credit of reducing its methods to an elaborate code. But it is impossible to sift fact from fable in this narrative. What we know for certain is that not until the year 726 A. D., when Shōmu reigned, did the Imperial Court extend its patronage to wrestling, and that whatever developments the science had received before that time, its etiquette, the forty-eight



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According to Emperor Sushū (24 B. C.) is probably the earliest example as any event referred to the Japanese annals preceding the advent of Islam in China. The story says that the custom of those days was to engage a palace-guard from soldiers to protect the vs., and that among the officers employed one Kelaya (or Kelaya) showed himself invincibly in combat and ever bearingly in defeat. The Emperor, hoping to find a match for his truest swagger, ordered a levy of the bravest men in the realm, among whom came a certain Sakune. He challenged the best, overthrew him, trampled him to death, and rewarded him with a wife, estate at Tay, na Yama to province. Tradition dates the science of wrestling from that event, and gives to Sakune the credit of reducing its methods to an elaborate code. But it is impossible to sift fact from fable in this narrative. What we know for certain is that not until the year 726 A. D., when Shōmu reigned, did the Imperial Court extend its patronage to wrestling, and that whatever developments the science had received before that time, its etiquette, the forty-eight

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varieties of orthodox grip, the gradation of its professors, the discipline of their training and the rules of their career, were gradually elaborated during and after the eighth century. Shiga Seirin of Omi was the master expert in the days of the Emperor Shōmu, and for four hundred and fifty years the duties of chief umpire (*gyojā*) were discharged at Court by successive generations of his descendants, until the line became extinct in 1187 A. D., when Yoshida Iyetsugu of Echizen succeeded to the post, receiving from his sovereign the name of Oikaze, with high official rank. Yoshida Oikaze's house is still flourishing, and to its representative alone belongs the right of bestowing the highest distinction that a wrestler can obtain, a cable-cincture (*yokozuna*) twisted out of two thick strands of white silk. It is not easy, nor would it be interesting, to trace the processes by which wrestling passed from the primitive programme in which one champion pitted himself successively against all comers, to the present elaborate system of camps and ranks. Like the dramatic dances described above, the sport served almost

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exclusively for aristocratic entertainment, until, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the Tokugawa Government permitted charity performances (*kanjin-zumo*) to be held in Yedo (Tokyo), the proceeds being devoted to the repair or construction of temples and shrines. Further, like all exercises of dexterity or ingenuity, wrestling received a great impetus during the last two centuries of feudalism, when each fief had its own champions, and interfeudal rivalry supplied a keen incentive to effort of every kind. It is said that in those palmy days of patronage, wrestlers attained a stature of seven feet and a weight of over four hundred pounds. Such men are no longer seen, though in height and bulk the modern wrestler offers an extraordinary contrast to his average fellow countryman: the latter measures sixty-two inches and weighs a hundred and fifty pounds; the former, in the first five grades, has a height of seventy-two inches and weighs two hundred and fifty pounds.¹ This

¹ The average height of the adult male Japanese, according to Dr. E. Baelz, the best authority on the ethnography of Japan, is 5 ft. 2½ inches, and that of the adult female, 4 ft. 8½ inches. Thus the male in Japan is about as tall as the female in Europe. The weight of the male is 125 lbs. in the lower orders, and from 115 to 120 lbs. in the

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striking difference has led many foreign observers to conjecture that the wrestler belongs to a special race. Such is not the case. The ranks of the wrestlers are recruited chiefly from the farming, fishing and woodman classes. In early

upper (against an average weight of 150 to 160 lbs. in Europe); the woman weighs from 102 to 105 lbs. It will be convenient to set down here some salient facts as to the physical structure and properties of the people, following always the authority of Dr. Baelz. The Japanese grows only 8 per cent of his stature from the time of puberty, whereas the European grows 13 per cent. The bulk of the people are strong. The upper classes are comparatively weakly, but the lower are robust and muscular. In the matter of weight, as well as in that of height and to a still more notable extent, development ceases sooner in the Japanese than in the European. The head is large, the face and torso are long, the legs short. Indeed, the length of the torso and the shortness of the legs are so marked as to constitute a valuable race characteristic. In a European the length of the leg from the trochanter to the ground is more than one half of the length of the body; in the Japanese it is distinctly less. The face, in consequence of the low bridge of the nose, is less prominent than that of the European, and appears to be broader, but is not really so. The forehead is low; the vertical distance between the tip of the nose and the upper lip, very small. The mouth is sometimes small and shapely, but frequently it is large and the teeth are prognathous. The eye is always dark, generally of a fine brown. It seems to be oblique, but the obliquity is due to the position of the lids. Further, the upper lid is almost a direct continuation of the skin of the forehead, instead of being recessed under the eyebrow, as is the case in Europeans. The cheeks are broad and flat; the chin narrow; the legs are often crooked and graceless, especially in women; the calves are strongly developed; the ankles thick; the feet broad; the arms, hands and neck remarkably graceful; the skin is light yellow, often not darker than that of southern Europeans, but sometimes as dusky as that of the Singhalese. The Japanese belong to the least hirsute of the human species. Their hair is black and straight. It turns grey at the age of forty-five to fifty, but baldness is comparatively rare. Dr. Baelz concludes that the finer type of the Japanese came from the borders of the Euphrates and Tigris, and finds a resemblance between them and the Egyptians.

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youth a lusty lad is apprenticed to some master of the art, and after long years of severe training and strict diet, he makes his *début* in the ring. His food is coarse but wholesome. In quantity it is supposed to be double that of an ordinary man. Nothing is interdicted save alcoholic excess. All the wrestlers in the empire are now divided into two camps, the eastern and the western, and the occupants of the camps are subdivided into classes. Each camp has its three champions, called, in order, the "great seat" (*o-seki*), the "seat-divider" — *i. e.*, middle-seat — (*seki-wake*), and the "front-head" (*mae-gashira*). Next come those "within the curtain" (*maku-no-uchi*) and those "below the curtain" (*maku-no-shita*), and then follow six classes down to the novice (*mae-zumo*). There are usually from twelve to thirteen "within the curtain" in each camp, and from thirty to fifty "below the curtain." The numbers in the other classes vary largely. Twice a year, in spring and in autumn, within the enclosure of the *Eko-in* in Tokyo, twice also in Osaka and Kyoto, and once in each important provincial centre, grand matches are

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held between the two camps; champion against champion, curtainer against curtainer, and so on. The combats take place in a sand-strewn ring, twenty-four feet in diameter, surrounded by a low rim of straw sand-bags. Planted immediately outside the rim, four posts mark the seats of as many "elders," and within the circle stands the umpire, dressed in the ceremonial costume of old times, and carrying a silk-tasselled fan, his badge of office. The contestants, wearing only loin-cloths and fringed girdles, enter the ring from their respective sides, salute the audience, spread their hands to signify implicit obedience to the umpire's rulings, strew salt in token of amity, stretch their muscles, stamp their feet, and finally face each other, sitting on their hams, in the centre of the circle. At this stage the umpire's responsibility is great. He has to see that when the men spring into grips—a consummation often preceded by many challenging attitudes on one side and refusals on the other—both are at the same stage of inhalation or exhalation, and neither obtains an advantage unrecognised by the subtle rules of the science.

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The commonest grip is an interlacing of the arms, or a grasp of the opponent's girdle, and victory depends on throwing the adversary or thrusting him out of the ring—one foot outside the sand-bags suffices. The most skilled champions are like fine fencers: they exert their force within narrow limits, their attack is delivered at short range, and their movements, though powerful, are always under strict command. Except to the initiated such play looks comparatively tame: the dash and spring, the fierce fight for grips and the headlong struggle of the novice are far more animated and picturesque. Imperturbable good-humour presides at all these contests, and a struggle is never permitted to outlast the scientific application of strength. If the umpire sees that both combatants are hesitating from exhaustion, he separates them, and, after a brief interval, replaces them in their former grips. Sometimes he separates them altogether and declares the combat a draw. The excitement of the audience occasionally rises to fever heat. Men throw their garments to the victor, and redeem them afterwards by money payments.

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Ten days is the duration of a bout, and the emoluments of the wrestlers vary from one *yen* to fifty, independently of presents received from the audience. These men are not in the least degraded by their rough profession. They are honest, simple, kindly fellows, never degenerating into bullies or drunken law-breakers. Such an incident as the arrest and punishment of a wrestler is virtually unknown. The goal of the career is to become an "elder" (*toshi-yori-yaku*), which fortune falls to the lot of those who have distinguished themselves by specially meritorious service in the cause of their profession. There are now some eighty elders. They organise the matches, administer the finances, act as referees, and take pupils. This last privilege does not belong even to a champion. Wrestlers who see no hope of becoming so distinguished as to secure special patronage, or of gaining admittance to the elders' rank, quietly retire to their native province and live by manual labour. There has been nothing in their professional life to unfit them for resuming the habits of their rural ancestors.

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Out of the mimetic dances so popular in Japan it may be supposed that the histrionic art would have grown at an early era, and that its development would have been rapid. Facts do not indorse such an inference. The drama proper was, indeed, born of the mimetic dance, but its nativity was curiously belated, and that it was born at all seems to have been, in great part, the result of accident. Many writers have been content to dismiss the subject with the curt remark that the Japanese theatre is of Chinese origin, and that the passage of the institution from one country to the other must be classed among the fortuitous incidents of neighbourly intercourse. But there are obstacles to the acceptance of that superficial view. In the days when the Ashikaga *Shogunate* was at the zenith of its power, the theatre had not yet made its appearance in Japan despite the long and, at times, intimate intercourse that had existed with China. The mimetic dances, of which we have already spoken under the general name of *no*, were, however, in wide vogue, and elaborate arrangements for their performance



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The mimetic dances, so popular in China, had appeared at the historic time in an early era, and that the progress had been rapid. Facts were everywhere. The drama was born from the mimetic dances, and was immediately belted, and that the drama seems to have been, in great measure, neglected. Many writers have been misled on the subject with the result that the Japanese theatre is of little account, and that the passage of the influence from one country to the other must be sought among the fortuitous incidents of the course. But there are obstacles to the acceptance of that superficial view. In the times when the *Ashiikago Shogunate* was at the height of its power, the theatre had not yet made its appearance in Japan despite the long and, at times, intimate intercourse that had existed with China. The mimetic dances, of which we have already spoken under the general name of *no*, were, however, in wide vogue, and elaborate arrangements for their performance



ACTORS IN THE ANCIENT DANCE KAGURA.

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on occasions of festivals existed in several of the great temples. They served, in short, not merely as an aristocratic pastime, but also as a means of replenishing the coffers of the shrines. A little later than the middle of the sixteenth century, the national shrine of Izumo was found to be in need of costly repairs, and one of its vestals (*miko*), O-Kuni, an exceptionally skilled dancer, whose posturing in the *kagura* (sacred dance) at times of worship had become famous, undertook to visit Kyoto for the purpose of enlisting assistance. She danced before the *Shogun* Yoshiteru, and pleased him so much that he issued orders for the repair of the shrine. There the story might have ended and the evolution of the Japanese drama might have been indefinitely postponed had not a very old-fashioned element come upon the scene. Among the retainers of the *Shogun* was one Nagoya Sanzaemon, whose duties consisted in superintending the arrangements for Court festivities. Sanzaemon and O-Kuni fell in love with one another, their *liaison* was discovered, and they were dismissed from the

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Shogun's service. The woman's wit suggested that they should earn a livelihood by practising in public the accomplishments they had acquired at the shrine and in the *Shogun's* Court, and thus they took to dancing on the sward of a common which may be seen to-day by any one visiting Kyoto and making his way to Kitano Shiba-wara (the Kitano moor). The name given to the scene of their performance and still used in the sense of "theatre" — *shibai*, or the sward (*shiba*) seat (*i*)¹ — perpetuates its rustic beginnings. O-Kuni's dance before the *Shogun* had been the immemorial *Ama-no-iwa-to*, the mythological deities inviting the sun goddess to emerge from her cave. What modifications she introduced for popular purposes it is impossible now to determine. The main fact is that she and her husband converted the mimetic dance from a religious rite or an aristocratic pastime into a bread-earning pro-

¹ The origin of the term is interesting. When the Imperial Court was at Nara (eighth century), pestilential vapours were found to proceed from a cave near one of the temples. The dance of *Okina Sanbaso*, to which allusion has been made in speaking of New-Year observances, was danced on the sward before the cave to dispel the evil influence, and people spoke of the performance as *shibai*, in allusion to the place where it was held.

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fession, and thus laid the foundation of the theatre. History is accurate enough to tell us something about O-Kuni's favourite costume — a wide-brimmed lacquer hat, a red rain-coat, a string of beads about her neck, and also that she often took the *rôle* of a man, assigning the female part to her husband, while one Densuke acted as buffoon. They had an immense success and found many imitators, but always among the lowest elements of the population. The Kyoto *filles de joie* seem to have thought this kind of enterprise¹ especially suited to their station and capacities. At the initiative of the still remembered Sadoshima Masakichi, they erected a stage in the dry bed of the river, and thus received the name "river-bed folk" (*kawara-mono*), an epithet significant of the contempt in which their profession was held. Sadoshima

¹ It was called *kabuki*, of which the ideographic significance is a performance (*ki*) of song (*ka*) and dance (*bu*). As to the origin of the word, however, some allege that it was a corruption of *katamuki*, to sway or overturn, and that it was used with reference to the transports of delight into which the audience ought to be thrown by such displays of skill. However that may be, the point to be noted is that the popular form of mime was named *kabuki*, as distinguished from the aristocratic *no*. To this day one of the principal theatres in Tokyo is called *Kabuki-za*, and the term might be properly applied to any place employed for histrionic representations.

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and her troupe, now including a number of performers of both sexes, made their way to Yedo (Tokyo) at the beginning of the seventeenth century. But if they had any hope of improving their status by this change of location, events disappointed them. Within the crowded precincts of the "eastern capital" not even a river-bed offered space for their purpose, and they were obliged to betake themselves to the degraded quarter—a suburb which had just sprung up on a site previously overgrown with reeds, the notorious *Yoshiwara* (reed-moor) of modern times. Thus the reputation of the new enterprise sank still lower, and by and by the conduct of the *danseuses*—whose number had now grown to nearly a hundred and fifty—being deemed injurious to public morals, the law stepped in and interdicted their performance. This happened in the year 1648. It was an event of great moment to the development of the histrionic art in Japan, for from that time actresses were never permitted to perform in company with actors, and it became necessary that the female *rôles* should be taken by men. Ap-

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parently such a veto should have proved a serious obstacle, but in truth its effect was small.

From the days of Genzaemon, a skilled musician and dancer who went from Kyoto to Yedo in the middle of the seventeenth century, carrying with him a wardrobe of female finery and astounding his contemporaries by his perfect studies of feminine ways, the playing of women's parts by men has been carried to an extraordinary degree of excellence. It happens again and again that the deception is so perfect as to defy the closest scrutiny. Even to those fully cognisant that mixed acting has not yet been introduced, it is sometimes impossible to believe that an innovation of that kind has not been effected. All the indescribable graces and subtle refinements of feminine deportment are reproduced with absolute fidelity, and it becomes easy to credit an assertion often made by persons familiar with the "green room," that such results are obtained only by acting the woman till the simulation becomes unconscious, and is preserved as faithfully in every-day life as on the stage.¹ We

¹ There is a well-known and fairly well-attested story that, on the occasion of a conflagration at a theatre, one of these male actresses

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may add here that although the old interdict no longer holds, the exclusive custom still prevails. Actresses there are, — two or three companies, — but their moral reputation is of the worst, and it is thought that their admission to the stage proper would sink it again to the low level from which it has barely begun to rise. Thus the *onna-shibai* (women's theatre) remains a thing apart, and until a new generation of *artistes* are specially educated, the ban of ostracism will continue in force. But these comments depart from the sequence of our history. It is a confused history, if we follow Japanese records; a history in which the growth of the drama itself has no concern for the narrator in comparison with the biographies of individual performers and the vicissitudes of their enterprise. By the middle of the seventeenth century, we find a term¹ employed which indicates that the histrionic element of the dance had assumed prominence, but it may be

thought only of saving his hand mirror. That they are constantly courted by amorous rustics unacquainted with theatrical usages is certain.

¹ *Mono-mane kyogen*, which literally signifies "imitative *divertissement*." *Kyogen*, in its original sense, means farcical, or burlesque, language, but was used with reference to the entertainment furnished by the choric monologues rather than to any extravagance in their diction.

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broadly stated that until the early years of the eighteenth century theatrical performances were only a special variety of the mimes already described under the name of *no-kyogen* and popularised as *kabuki*. The dancers, by gesture and facial expression, portrayed the motives and sentiments attributed to them by a chorus of singers, but remained always mute themselves. Marionette shows had much to do with the development of the true drama. Their use in association with music and song dated from about the year 1605, and gradually attained such a degree of elaboration that the task of composing puppet plays began to occupy the attention of men of letters. Early in the eighteenth century, two dramatists, Chikamatsu Monzaemon and Takeda Izumo, adapted for the marionette stage celebrated historical incidents, like the vendetta of the Forty-seven *Ronin*, and the expulsion of the Dutch from Formosa by the pirate King Kokusen-ya (known in European annals as Coxinga). These men were the fathers of the Japanese drama, and it is a noteworthy fact that their talent as playwrights was without precedent in its time

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and has remained without peer ever since. The magnificent costumes of the marionettes were adopted by the actors; wigs took the place of the kerchiefs previously wrapped round the head; scenery was added, and at last the drama reached its present stage of development.

This skeleton record has a value not merely historical. It brings into prominence the two factors that have chiefly operated in the development of the Japanese drama, namely, that the performances took place originally in the open air and that they had a choragic accompaniment. A necessary result of the former was that the dais where the acting had its focus did not constitute the limits of the stage. Instead of emerging from mysterious regions behind doors or partitions, the performers throughout the whole course of their comings and goings remained under the eyes of the audience. The very rudiments of art prescribed such a method in the case of dancing; for motion to be perfectly musical must be smooth and continuous, the dancer must enter the field of vision without any violent transition from rest to activity. Hence it

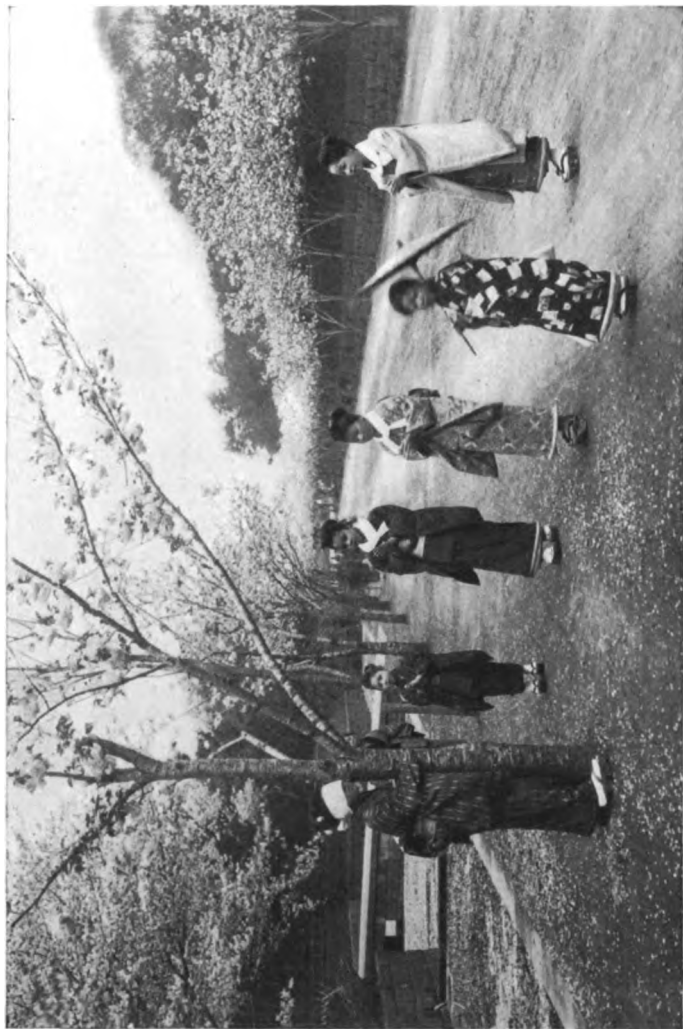


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PLAYING BLINDMAN'S BUFF IN A SIDE STREET LEADING TO THE
MOAT IN TOKYO.

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was quickly understood that he must dance to the dais, and out of that canon grew the idea of making a route from the back of the auditorium to the stage. It was appropriately bounded by lines of blossoms, and thus received the name "flower path" (*hana-michi*). Another result of the *al-fresco* performance was that the environment of the stage had to be included in the scenic *ensemble*. The stage became merely a part of a general scheme of decoration in which not only the auditorium but also the whole space within the range of the spectator's vision were comprised. At first the dancers set up a dais wherever space was conveniently available; no special steps were taken to provide accommodation for the audience. But by and by a semi-circular platform was erected for the better classes of spectators. This innovation is perpetuated in the nomenclature of the theatre, for inasmuch as "deadheads" made a habit of peeping at the performance through the scaffolding that supported the platform, they received the name of *uzura* (quails) in allusion to their stooping posture, and by that name the portion of the auditorium

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immediately below the gallery continues to be called to-day.

From the erection of this crescent of seats to the complete enclosure of the place of performance and the building of a permanent hall, progress was natural and quick. The theatre assumed a form which has varied little during the past century. There is a pit divided into a number of little cubicals with matted floors where the people sit, *more Japonico* ; there are tiers of boxes on either side ; there is a broad corridor at the back, and to the right and left of the stage there are elevated boxes for the chorus and the reciters, who are almost concealed from the audience by bamboo blinds. All these arrangements are simple and somewhat rude ; the comfort of the spectator is little consulted. The stage revolves. How and when that excellent idea occurred to the Japanese, we have no evidence. They did not get it from China or India, and it can scarcely have come to them through ancient Grecian traditions. The element of naturalness and realism that it adds to the performance cannot be overestimated. It doubles the scope of the representation. The outside of a

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house is shown, and so is everything that passes outside by way of preliminary to what is about to occur within. Then the stage revolves and the same actors appear in the indoor scene. Elaborations of such a facility are innumerable and will be easily conceived without any detailed description.

The "flower road" is an important adjunct. An underground passage enables the actor to get from the back of the stage to a point behind the auditorium, whence he emerges on the *hana-michi* and makes his way through the audience to the stage. He is acting all the while, perhaps conferring with a companion as to the course to be pursued when they reach their destination, perhaps stealing along to effect a surprise, perhaps hesitating about the welcome that awaits him, perhaps lingering in the reluctance of a final farewell. The effect is not merely to enhance the realism and deepen the interest, but also to make the whole audience participate in the action of the drama and to enable accessory incidents to be developed simultaneously with the unfolding of the central plot. A similar extension of dramatic capabilities results from the choragic adjunct. On the stage of

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the Occident dialogue, monologue or a "situation" is always necessary. That vast domain of everyday life where the lips are silent, though the mental preludes or consequences of important events are in full progress, cannot be shown without violating truth. The performer is obliged to think aloud even though breathless silence be prescribed by all the probabilities of the scene. He has to interrupt the action of the plot in order to take the audience into his confidence, in order to unveil sentiments which did they really control his acts would never tolerate such interruptions. The Japanese method does not compel speech to play that exaggerated and unnatural part in the drama of life. Monologues are not sanctioned unless the situation is such as to evoke them naturally. Sometimes a great part of a scene takes place without any interchange of words or any use of speech by the actors. They confine themselves to depicting moods or performing acts which the choragic reciter explains. The pantomime is admirable, occasionally a little exaggerated, but reaching on the whole to an extraordinarily high standard of mimetic art. That is the natural re-

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sult of a system which assigns as much importance to the mimetic side of the drama as to the spoken. It is probably safe to affirm that the Japanese are the greatest mimics in the world.

There is, however, one feature which contrasts strangely with this obedience to the verities. The mechanics of the drama are suffered to obtrude themselves upon public observation through the medium of stage attendants. These persons, draped and veiled in "invisible" colours, are appropriately called "blacks" (*kurombo*). They openly assist at the intricate transformations of costume occasionally demanded by the progress of the play, and they clear the stage of encumbrances which, in an Occidental theatre, would necessitate a tableau and fall of the curtain. Thus a veiled figure may be seen, now aiding a dancer to emerge, chrysalis-like, from a sombre surcoat into a butterfly robe; now holding a little curtain of black cloth between the audience and a supposed corpse while the latter removes itself. Such discordant notes destroy the realistic harmony of the general action. They are, as will readily be conjectured, defects that have descended from the days of marionettes, and

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within the past few years they have almost disappeared.

In speaking of the Japanese drama a very notable point has to be recorded: the same plays have held the stage for more than a century. We should have a parallel in the West if English theatres had confined themselves to Shakespeare ever since the publication of his works. The Japanese generally knows beforehand exactly what he is to see at the theatre, and knows that his father and his grandfather saw the same piece. New dramatists are now beginning to make their appearance, but the old may be said to occupy the field still. Thus the value that attaches to the skill of the actors cannot be overestimated. There are farces, of course, — “gossip plays” (*sewa kyogen*), as they are called, — but they serve chiefly to relieve the tension of the drama, and are usually played between the acts of the latter. It must be confessed that until modern times Japanese comedy was distinctly broad. It sometimes employed materials that are banished from the daylight of Western decorum, and derived inspiration from incidents that would shock fastidious

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delicacy in Europe. But these blemishes were usually softened by an atmosphere of naturalness and simplicity. They did not indicate moral debasement such as would accompany similar absence of reserve in a Western country. To interpret them in that manner would have been to mistake artlessness for obscenity. As reasonably might one confound the undisguised diction of the Pentateuch with the prurient coarseness of "Love in a Wood" or "The Country Wife." If Japanese comedy had much in common with the works of Juvenal and Aristophanes, it seldom recalled Wycherley or Congreve. If it sometimes raised a laugh at the grosser phases of life, it scarcely ever became a vehicle for presenting to public imagination the immoral in company with the attractive. And the new civilisation may be said to have purged it of all evil elements. In modern Japan a year's advance represents in many cases a decade of progress. The present generation of Japanese are probably as far removed from the license of *pre-Meiji* days as the English of our era are from the indecencies of "The Rake's Progress" and "Tristram Shandy."

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The social status of the actor has not yet been appreciably raised. The theatre, indeed, is no longer avoided by the upper classes, but only as a point of special complaisance do they occasionally admit the stars of the stage to their company. In no small degree the actor himself is responsible for this anomaly. With little hope of improving his station he pays little heed to the obligations of respectability. He apparently thinks that a vicious life cannot add much to the disabilities under which he already labours. At the same time fate, with its usual waywardness, impels the professional *danseuse* (*geisha*) to seek in the actor's unconventional society solace for the orderly services that she is obliged to render in aristocratic circles whence the actor is ostracised. With these "butterflies of the banquet" the object of making money is generally to spend it on an actor. One can easily guess how it fares with the actor in the absence of social restraint and in the presence of such strong temptation. Besides, he has not even the solace of knowing that worldly prosperity will reward his talents.

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MAKING A TOILET.

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It has always been and still is the rule that a play should run for at least twenty-three days. Very often, of course, the period is extended. For such a term the emoluments of Ichikawa Danjuro, incomparably the greatest actor of his era, are twenty-five hundred *yen*. If, however, he has played in an exceptionally arduous *rôle*, an additional honorarium of from two to three thousand *yen* is given. There are some seven performances yearly. Thus Danjuro's annual income is from ten to fifteen thousand gold dollars. Out of that total, however, he has to disburse large sums for the hire of his costumes, which are not provided by the theatre, and for the support of pupils (*deshi*) who constitute a kind of society to promote his influence and perpetuate his style. Moreover, the unwritten law of the actor's profession requires that he shall live on a scale of lavish expenditure. Apart from the tendency, encouraged by his art, to court public notice by magnificent ostentation, there is an instinctive resort to that agreeable method of self-advertisement, and there is also an unconfessed but powerful desire to prove

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that fortune favours him though aristocrats are unkind. Thus the comings and goings of great actors partake of the nature of royal progresses. They never descend to the rôle of an humble citizen. Everywhere they carry the stage with them, and whether they visit a spa in the dog days, or take an evening's outing on a river, or organise a picnic to view "snow flowers" or go on a fishing expedition, or stay at home, they are always acting the *grand seigneur* in fact as well as in fashion. The inimitable Danjuro, indeed, departs somewhat from these extravagances, and it is just to add that he is a conspicuous exception to the common rule of licentious living. But, on the whole, the actor and his art alike suffer from abuses which are, perhaps, the inevitable outgrowth of an unhonoured employment. The lessee of a theatre is at the mercy of a capitalist; the actor at that of the property man. The lessee generally has no capital but his official license; the capitalist has a list of the theatre's liabilities, contracted some in the present, some in the past, and usually aggregating a sum beyond all reason-

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able possibility of liquidation. The bulk of the theatrical wardrobe is owned by merciless monopolists who extort the last *sen* for the use of a costume. From the capitalist the lessee receives at each representation just enough money to defray current expenses, and for that accommodation is required not merely to repay the advance, but also to set aside from the takings interest at the rate of thirty or forty per cent. Thus actor and lessee alike are weighted by a heavy load of debt. That theatrical enterprise should show little vitality under such circumstances is natural. An attempt has indeed been made to improve the stage, the scenery and the equipment of the house, but the results have not been so successful as to warrant the extension of the effort beyond one theatre. The low status of the profession is still glaringly displayed in meagre scenery, rough wooden buildings and accommodations of the crudest and most comfortless description. Only at the one theatre just spoken of, the *Shintomi-za* or "New-wealth theatre," has the custom of holding representations that last from

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morning till evening been cut down by a moiety. The waste of time thus entailed and the unwholesome effects of sitting for so many hours in a crowded, ill-ventilated building are not the only evil features of the habit. People who spend the day looking at a play must be provided with meals, and out of that necessity there springs up around the theatre a little city of restaurants and tea-houses, all adding to the costliness of the entertainment and subtracting from the productive capacity of the nation. The theatre, in fact, has not shared the general progress of modern Japan. Yet it certainly has a great future before it, for, in addition to the unique features of which we have spoken, there is histrionic capacity of the very highest order. Ichikawa Danjuro and Onoye Kikugoro the princes of the stage at present would long ago have earned a world-wide reputation had their lot been cast in any Western country. There cannot be any second opinion about their capacities, or about their title to rank with the greatest tragedians in the world. But in their own country, though their names are household

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words, the taint of their profession clings to them still. Men speak of them as a ballet dancer of extraordinary agility or a banjo player of eminent skill would be spoken of in Europe or America—renowned exponents of a renowned art.

From pastimes common to all seasons we turn, for a moment, to the observances of the twelfth month, the “last child” (*otogo*) of the year. Its opening day brings once more upon the scene the perennial rice dumpling, now eaten by all that go down to the sea in ships, a charm against perils of wave and flood. The part played by this particular comestible in Japanese religious rites and ceremonies doubtless excites the reader’s curiosity. It is the sacred bread of the nation, but it owes its exalted character to nothing more mysterious than its circular shape, a type of the mirror used to entice the wayward sun goddess from her cave in the days of the beginning of all things. In the cities these quaint customs are gradually fading from public sight, but some of them are preserved from oblivion by the motives that they furnish to artists.

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Probably no collection of Japanese objects of vertu is without three or four representations in wood, ivory or bronze, of the *tsuina*, or demon-expelling ceremony. In the artist's hands it takes the form of a devil flying from a shower of beans directed against him by a householder in gala costume. The whole ceremony, as practised by the people, is sufficiently depicted by this brief description. On the last night of the old year, the night that divides (*setsu-bun*) winter from spring, parched beans are scattered about the house, with repeated utterance of the formula "out devils, enter fortune (*oni soto fuku uchi*). There was a time when this rite was performed in the Imperial Court on an imposing scale. Four bands of twenty youths, each wearing a four-eyed mask, a black surcoat and a red body garment, and each carrying a halberd in the left hand, marched simultaneously from the four gates of the palace, driving the devils before them.

A great plague at the beginning of the eighth century suggested the need of this ceremony, and China furnished the programme, but modern

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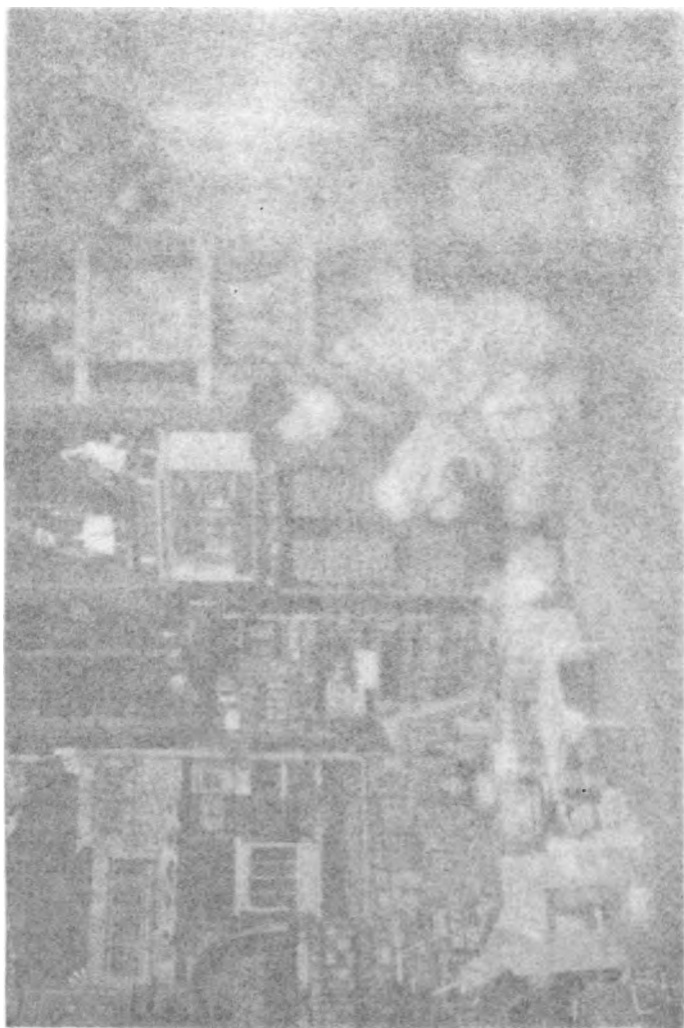
Japan is content to bombard with beans the sprite of ill luck, trusting bacteriologists to exorcise the imps of pestilence. Some of the ancient customs, however, have not changed with the times. Industrious women still make offerings of broken needles at the temple of Awashima on the 8th of the month and still abstain from all sewing on that day. In every home there is still a grand "smut sweeping" (*susu-harai*), sometimes on the 18th, sometimes at the close of the month. "Feasts of year-forgetting" (*bonen-kai*) are still organised to dispel regrets for the death of another span of life; and in the shadows of the tutelary deities' temples and shrines night fairs are still held, to which the people throng in vast crowds to buy pines of perennial verdure, lobsters of longevity, ropes of perfumed straw, and all the other decorative adjuncts of the season, as well as battle-boards for little girls and kites for boys. The fairs themselves are festivals, bright landmarks in the lives of the young, revivals of fond memories for the old.

XVII

JAPAN'S COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL INTERCOURSE WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES



WE HAVE NOW TO CONSIDER a subject which has already engaged the pens of many writers, elicited singularly divergent expressions of opinion and provoked extensive controversy—the subject of Japan's political and commercial relations with the outer world. It is a subject of much interest, but in order to equip ourselves for its intelligent consideration we must undertake a prefatory inquiry, brief, indeed, but deterrent to the general reader. We must learn something about the media of exchange in old Japan; something about the ratio between the precious metals and the manner of their circulation; something about the remuneration of labour and the prices of staple commodities; and something about the attitude



CHAPTER XVII

COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES



WE HAVE NOW TO CONSIDER a subject which has already engaged the pens of many writers, and which has singularly divergent explanations and provoked extensive discussion. The subject of Japan's political and commercial relations with the outer world. It is a subject of great interest, but in order to secure its intelligent consideration we must make a preliminary inquiry, brief, but pertinent to the general reader, into the following: something about the media of commerce; something about the trade of Japan; something about the principal exports, metals and the manufactures; something about the principal imports; something about the staple products of Japan; and the prices of staple products; something about the attitude of the foreign nations.



A DEALER IN INLAID WOODENWARE.

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of officialdom toward trade. These things occupy a more or less important place in every chapter of the story.

In Japan, as in Europe, old-time officialdom regarded the realm of trade as falling within its legitimate control. From time to time edicts were issued fixing the prices of commodities and prescribing the method of conducting transactions. As early as the beginning of the eighth century a ministry of finance was organised, and the name then given to it remains in use to this day. Its functions extended not merely to matters of finance, but also to determining the exchangeable values of coins and goods, and further to regulating weights and measures. This reference to coins indicates that they existed in Japan at an early epoch. The courageous chroniclers of the semi-mythical Empress Jingo (201 A. D.) allege that among the spoils carried by her from Korea were coins in the shape of a bird, but those curiosities remain a mere tradition. Not until the year 485 A. D. does any trustworthy record present itself. Silver coins seem to have served as tokens of

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exchange at that era. But they were not in common use. The Japanese did not possess stores of precious metal sufficient for purposes of currency. There were no mines in the country. Whenever gold or silver came across the sea in the form of gifts or tribute from China or Korea, the casting of idols suggested itself as the natural use for these rare and beautiful objects, and if they were not devoted to that pious end, they served as personal ornaments, or were employed in the decorative arts. It must not be inferred that the Japanese, at any era of their history, practised the savage fashion of thrusting circlets of the precious metals through their ears or noses, or loading themselves with collars, rings and bracelets of gold and silver. The insecurity of property to which that barbarous fancy owed its origin was happily unknown in Japan. Gold and silver were esteemed chiefly for their beauty. They entered into costume in the form of embroidery. They were used for embellishing weapons of war and inlaying armour. Considerable quantities were absorbed by the lacquerer and the sculptor in the

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shape of dust and leaf, and up to the middle of the seventh century it was customary to place in the coffin of a deceased aristocrat, portions not only of the noble metals, but also of copper and iron. Not until 675 A. D. was silver discovered within the Japanese realm. The island of Tsushima furnished it, and of the first supply forwarded to the government, portions were offered to the gods,—which means, of course, that they came into the possession of the priests,—the rest being distributed among officials and men of rank. The discovery of copper followed that of silver by twenty-three years, and at the close of the seventh century a mint was established where, according to the records, coins of gold, silver, copper and iron were struck, though it must be noted that neither the silver nor the gold tokens were made from metal produced in Japan. From a practical point of view we may consider that the first coinage operations took place during the *Wado* era (708 A. D.) and that the tokens then struck were almost entirely of copper. A silver piece was, indeed, issued, but the quantity

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was too limited to affect general transactions of trade. Interesting and suggestive measures were adopted by the authorities to put an end to the method of barter hitherto in vogue and to induce the people to accept the new coins as media of exchange—measures evidently dictated by economical principles of Chinese origin. One Imperial edict urged farmers and merchants to appraise their products and commodities in terms of the new tokens, and promised that steps of official rank should be given to persons who accumulated stores of copper *cash*; a second made the possession of a fortune of six thousand *cash* an essential preliminary to promotion in office; a third directed that land sales effected by process of barter, and not by transfer of coin, would involve confiscation of the land; a fourth ordered travellers to carry a stock of coin instead of a store of goods for defraying the expenses of their journey; and a fifth enacted that taxes might be received in coin instead of in kind. Such primeval legislation throws a curious light on the fiscal intelligence of the era. It was quickly followed by the conse-

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quences that might naturally have been expected. Scarcely ninety years had elapsed before the government found it necessary to prohibit the hoarding of *cash* and to remind the agricultural class that, in the event of a bad harvest, coins could not be cooked and eaten. But the propensity to hoard had already become epidemic. Another decree quickly followed, declaring that any person who concealed coins and paid his taxes in kind would have his store of cash confiscated, one fifth of the amount being promised to an informer. All through the history of those early centuries we can trace the arbitrariness and the embarrassments of Japan's empirical financiers. The people, of frugal habits and generally in humble circumstances, had little use for exchange media of large denominations. They did not want gold or silver coins, except to a very limited extent, and could not have procured them, for the mintage of such tokens was insignificant. When a merchant came into possession of either gold or silver he paid it out by weight, cutting it into parallelograms of the required size; and in later times—from

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the eleventh to the sixteenth century—all coinage operations being interrupted by domestic troubles, the precious metals were exported to China to purchase copper tokens, for which alone any really wide use existed. While the mint worked, it turned out from five and one half to one and three quarters millions of copper *cash* annually, figures whose difference furnishes incidental evidence, not merely, as might naturally be supposed, of the variable output of the mines, but also of the prime importance attached in those eras to the worship of heaven. For the chief demand for copper being in connection with the casting of idols, it resulted that the quantity available for coinage purposes depended largely upon the fervour of the Court's piety, or the need of invoking heaven's aid in some national crisis. Religious zeal thus became responsible for the earliest debasement of the coinage. During the first hundred years of minting operations, the weight of the copper unit varied within comparatively narrow limits in five issues. But the business of erecting temples and peopling them with images of the gods attained

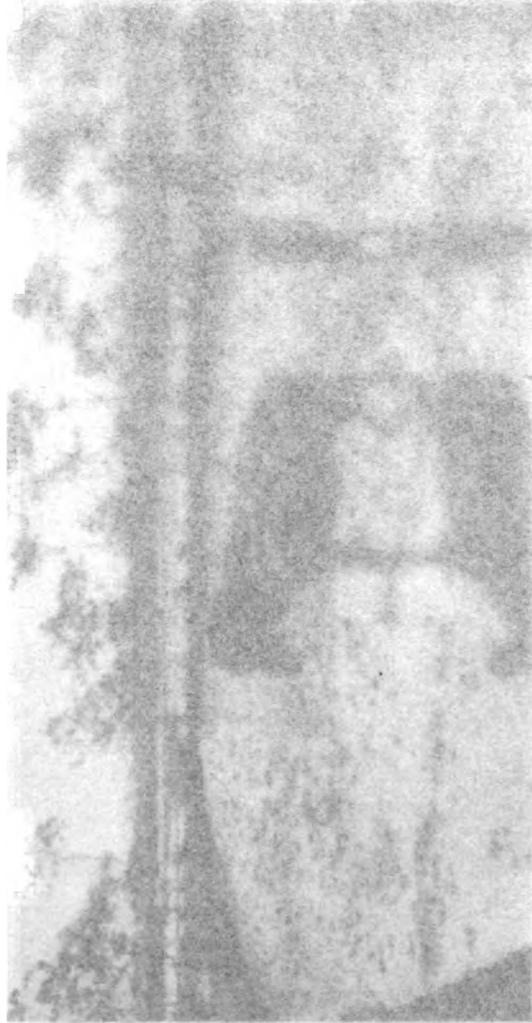
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such extraordinary dimensions during the Nara epoch and the opening years of the Heian era that the government, finding the supply of copper inadequate and the treasury exhausted, hit upon the device of debasing the coinage, and the weight of copper in the unit suddenly fell by nearly fifty per cent. Another scheme was to strike special coins to which arbitrary values were given far in excess of their intrinsic values as compared with the unit. The perplexity and confusion resulting from these financial vagaries were of course very great. Even apart from such technical irregularities, it is difficult to imagine how a people of whose refined and almost luxurious habits so much has been written should have resigned themselves to copper monometallism, and conducted nearly all their transactions of exchange with media of which the highest denomination did not exceed a quarter of a cent. Purses there were none of course, at least none to which the term would now be applicable. Money bags were used and boxes, but a hand-cart was the usual means of transporting these *cash*, which were strung on

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ropes of straw with knots dividing them into hundreds and thousands. It will readily be conceived that the coins themselves were not high specimens of minting technique. The ideographs entering into their superscriptions had generally the honour of being moulded after a copy traced by some renowned or princely calligraphist, but the mint's appliances were rude, and from time to time merchants exercised their judgments so far as to reject defaced coins or accept them at greatly reduced values, discrimination which the Emperor Saga (820 A. D.) checked by flogging the fastidious trader, His Majesty's theory being that the tenderer of a coin was not responsible for its condition or quality and should not be exposed to the risk of a reduced dinner or a curtailed coat because the disk of the token happened to be serrated or its superscription illegible.

It cannot be doubted that in the government's defective and dishonest coinage is to be found one of the causes which contributed to blunt what philosophers have called "the commercial conscience" in Japan. In the realm where strict integrity was conspicuously essential to the safe



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RAKING A RICE FIELD.

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conduct of tradal affairs, an example of selfish unscrupulousness was set by those to whom the people were naturally entitled to look for standards of morality. Comparing the Chinese and the Japanese, there is a consensus of foreign opinion that the former have the keener appreciation of the value of honesty as a commercial policy. That view derives support from the events of which we are writing. The copper coins obtained by Japan from her neighbour were always intrinsically more trustworthy than those struck by herself, and the people showed their appreciation of the fact by circulating the former at four times the exchange value of the latter. Strenuous efforts were made by the government to prevent such discrimination. It seems to have been regarded as a species of *lèse-majesté* that a farmer or a trader, a "common fellow," should venture to prefer a foreign coin to a domestic, or, in the matter of Japanese tokens, should exercise a right of choice between pieces which, whatever their variations of intrinsic value, were uniformly franked by sovereign sanction. Need it be recorded that the victory ultimately rested

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with the people? A good many were scarred in the fight, carried to their graves stigmata branded on their cheeks by official irons; others paid the penalty of three days' exposure on the public highway, and had the chagrin of seeing every member of their village fined for their sin of "shroffing." But in Tokugawa days the government abandoned the fight, and the Chinese *cash* were definitely recognised as possessing four times the value of their Japanese contemporaries.

Brought now to the question of the purchasing power of these liliputian coins, we are prepared to find that it bore a very high ratio to their intrinsic value, in accordance with the venerable rule that the smaller the denomination of the unit of exchange, the greater its relative value in terms of commodities. The standard measure of capacity in Japan is a *koku* (5.18 bushels), which is decimally subdivided into *to*, *sho* and *go*. Many notices of the price officially fixed for rice are found in the old chronicles. Almost without exception it was one *cash* (*mon*) per *go*, or a thousand *cash* per *koku*. This very convenient assessment at once suggests an im-

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portant fact; namely, that rice itself was a standard of value. That has been the case down to the latest times. Taxes, as we have seen, were originally levied in the form of a percentage of the gross produce of a farm. Then, when copper having been discovered here and there throughout the empire, supplies of it became desirable for minting purposes, the government enacted, first, that taxes might be paid in that metal, and, subsequently, that they should be paid in coin; changes obviously necessitating an official assessment of the *koku* in terms of *cash*. Fiscal convenience dictated the simplest possible assessment, so the *koku* was declared to represent one *kwan* (1,000 *cash*), and its thousandth subdivision, the *go*, became the equivalent of one *cash*. Of course nature, notably capricious in sub-tropical countries like Japan, did not lend constant sanction to such an arbitrarily fixed value. Sometimes a *koku* of rice sold in the open market for nearly twice the official figure, and once, in time of famine (867 A. D.), it rose to eight times that figure. But even as late as the era of the "Shadow *Shoguns*" of Kamakura

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(1280) the government, maintaining its theoretical independence of storms and inundations, clung to the old assessment of one *go* for one *mon*, and we may assert, without much risk of error, that up to comparatively modern times the official figure corresponded with the true market measure. A labourer in Japan is credited with capacity to consume 5 *go* (1½ pints) of rice daily; a man of refined habits is allowed 3 *go*. It is thus seen that in old times a thousand *cash* purchased from 200 to 333 days' supply of rice for an adult. The same quantity now costs fourteen times as much.

Rice is a great deal more to the Japanese than bread is to an Occidental people, and a little less than bread and meat in combination. Even in this era of railroads and steamboats there are many Japanese to whom a cup of rice is as great a treat, and as rare, as a beefsteak to an Irish squatter. In the early and middle ages, not a few unblest rustics lived and died without knowing the taste of the precious grain. Barley, millet, pickled turnip, or some other vegetable, a modicum of salted fish or seaweed,

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and a seasoning of soy, such was the farmer's fare. Rough as it was he invested its consumption with an air of ceremony and punctilio. Unlike the Chinaman, whose bowl of condiments is common to the chopsticks of all the convives, each Japanese had his own special utensils and his own particular tray to support them. A lacquered bowl containing soup made by boiling shreds of dried bonito with soy and garden stuff; a tiny plate of pungent *daikon* and salted egg-plant; a saucer of pickled greens,—with such luxuries was the feast spread. But everything occupied the rank of a mere relish compared with the *pièce de résistance*, rice; supposing that article of diet to be within the feaster's means. The difference was vividly illustrated in the manner of using the chopsticks. They played the part of dainty triflers on their visits to the bowls and plates, picking up a morsel here or a shred there; but when they had to do with the rice, they were suddenly converted into vigorous shovels for packing the mouth with substantial portions from the soft white pile.

XVIII

JAPAN'S COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL INTERCOURSE WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES

(Concluded)



JAPANESE BEING ASKED to name the necessities of life, replies at once, "rice and charcoal," those being his staple representatives of food and fuel. In mediæval times a horse-load of charcoal cost a hundred *cash*; to-day the same quantity costs 1.40 *yen*. Here again we have the same ratio as that found in the case of rice, 1 to 14. Linen cloth, also, as noted in a previous chapter, was a standard of value in the ancient as well as the middle ages. Its value in the eighth century was officially fixed at 15 *mon* per roll of 30 feet (one *tan*), which quantity cannot be procured now for less than 60 *sen*, or forty times the old figure. In the field of ordinary labour, too, we find a marked variation. During

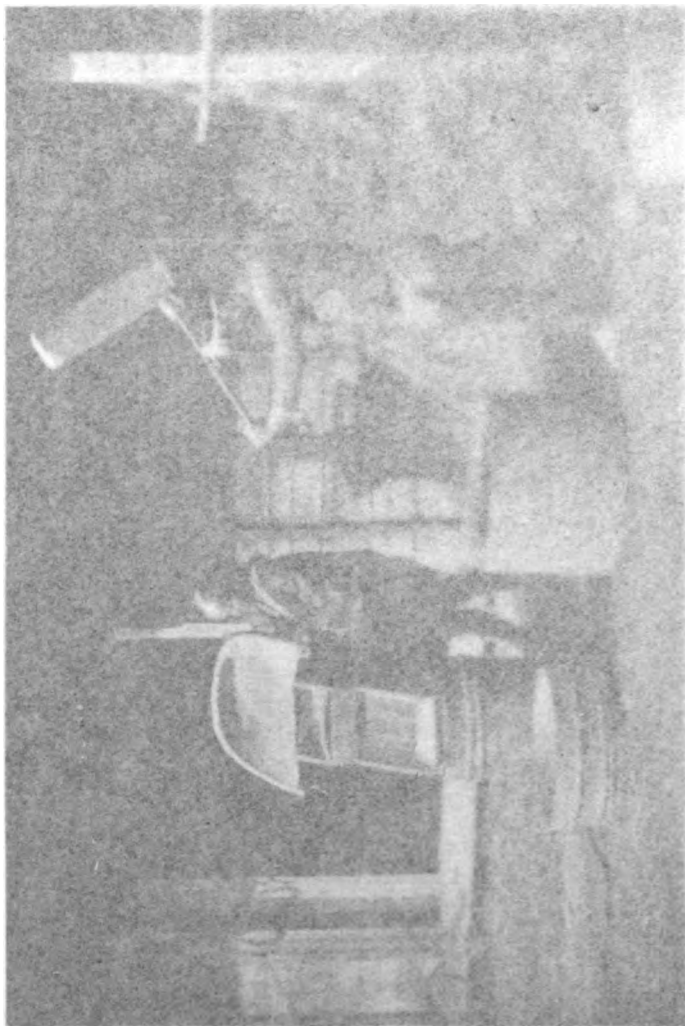
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the eighth century the ten days' forced labour which a farmer had to perform annually to official order was declared commutable for 15 *mon*; in the ninth century the figure was doubled; and under the Tokugawa Regency labour was assessed at 5 *mon* per diem, in other words, 5 *go* of rice, which quantity, as we have seen, was supposed to represent the consumption of a labouring adult. At present, a labourer's daily wage, taking the lowest figure, is 20 *sen*, or forty times the rate of Tokugawa times. Thus rice, the staple of national diet, has appreciated only fourteen-fold since the seventeenth century, whereas the earnings of the labourer have increased forty-fold. To put the case differently, the workingman at present earns seven days' rations of rice by one day's toil, whereas in the seventeenth century a day's work meant a day's rice. The difference is that he can afford to eat rice now and has come to regard it as a necessity, not a luxury. If any other illustration be desired of the marked change that has taken place in the purchasing power of money in Japan, it is furnished by a decree issued in 1617, which fixed the charge for a night's lodging in an

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inn on the great trunk road at 4 *cash*; that is to say, about one and a half cents for dinner, bed and breakfast. The same accommodation now costs fifty *sen*, which is 125 times the old figure, if the rates in copper alone be considered, and sixteen times, if the *débâcle* in the sterling value of silver be taken into account.

These details are wearisome, but without them the reader can form no intelligent conception of the conditions under which Japan's foreign commerce and foreign intercourse commenced in the fifteenth century, nor appreciate the difficulties that attended the resumption of her relations with the outer world fifty years ago. It will be perceived that the people of the island empire were ill-equipped for the trade operations in which their Portuguese visitors invited them to engage in the days of Mendez Pinto and Francis Xavier. They were eager, indeed, to acquire novel products, but they had never been suffered to temper their curiosity by independent experience. If any one ventured — as many did whenever a chance offered — to forestall the customs officials, and purchase articles imported from China before their value



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POUNDING RICE.

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had been fixed by a government not merely fond of its own perquisites but also firmly persuaded that to allow foreigners to benefit by Japanese competition would be thoroughly false statecraft, such a person risked the punishment of three years' imprisonment with hard labour and the confiscation of the goods he had bought. Moreover, since an informer in such cases received one half of the confiscated articles, the difficulty of evading the vigilance of the law cannot have been small. On the other hand, the fact that Chinese *cash* circulated freely in Japan must have greatly facilitated the commerce which, as we have observed, had been carried on fitfully with the neighbouring empire for centuries before the coming of the Portuguese. Nor were the latter placed at any special disadvantage. It is true that for them tokens of copper and iron signified merely so much old metal. But they could receive and pay gold and silver by weight, since with such a method of exchange the Japanese had long been familiar, and very soon after the arrival of the "black ship" at Tanegashima, steps were taken by that most astute statesman, the *Taiko*, to meet the commercial

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need of the time by striking gold coins in large quantity, and simultaneously putting into general circulation ingots of silver stamped with the marks of official assayers and weighers. Still, if technical obstacles did not exist, the Japanese laboured under two great disqualifications, namely, almost absolute inexperience and a traditional habit of relying on official tutelage in commercial affairs. He was accustomed to exchange his staple commodities at prices fixed by law ; he did not enjoy the privilege of discriminating between the intrinsic values of the coins issuing from the mint, but was required to render blind deference to their superscriptions ; his commercial conscience had been blunted by repeated evidences of the government's financial unscrupulousness ; tradition and the inflexible rules of caste taught him to place trade at the lowest point in the scale of human occupations, and he lived in an essentially military age when the business type was out of touch with its environment and had not yet attained any appreciable development. Observing these antecedents, we now find ourselves confronted by a strange consequence. It was not inconsistent with the

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spirit of such a time that raids and forays should be made into the territories of neighbouring states, and that the rudimentary instinct of gain should find satisfaction in plunder won at the point of the sword. It has been shown, in fact, that raids and forays of that kind attained extraordinary dimensions in the very era now under review. But that national enterprise should turn into the paths of commerce, and that the people should suddenly exhibit a marked faculty for engaging with vigour and success in the routes of peaceful trade where countries like Portugal, Spain, Holland and England were then supposed to enjoy a monopoly, was a result altogether at variance with any reasonable anticipation. Yet that is what happened. Between the coming of the Portuguese in 1542 and the closing of Japan to the outer world in 1686, the Japanese established commercial relations and inaugurated a trade of more or less volume with no less than twenty foreign markets. The reputation that Japan subsequently acquired owing to more than two centuries of semi-seclusion has hidden these facts from general observation, but they are none the less historical.

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Two things present themselves clearly to our view : first, that there was originally no evidence whatever of a disposition to impose restrictions on the comings and goings of Western traders ; and, secondly, that the benefits of commerce, as exemplified by the doings of those traders, impelled Japan to immediate and enthusiastic imitation. Portuguese ships were made free to visit any part of the realm. To the Dutch and English, when they came in the early years of the seventeenth century, similar freedom of commerce was granted. They received written authorisation, over the vermilion stamp of the Tokugawa *Shogun*, to “conduct trade without molestation in any port or at any place in Japan.” There was no imposition of onerous taxes or duties. Presents had to be made to local officials and to the central government, but their total value never exceeded five per cent of the nominal cost of the cargo on account of which they were made.

Under these circumstances trade ought to have prospered. Assuming that the nation possessed any commercial instincts, however

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rudimentary, and that profitable opportunities existed,—two assumptions amply justified by the evidence of history,—such absence of restriction and such freedom from crippling imposts should have been attended by the prosperous results that similar conditions have everywhere produced. Yet, eighty-seven years after this conspicuous inauguration of foreign intercourse, Japan made an almost complete reversal of her national policy, adopted an exclusive attitude, substituted distrust and aversion for the confidence and amity of her previous mood, and asserted her right of isolation with fierce and unrelenting imperiousness. What had happened to produce this remarkable metamorphosis? That is what we have now to inquire.

Close upon the footsteps of the pioneers of trade followed the pioneers of Christianity. They too were hospitably received. It is true that the sequel of their propagandism shows Japan resorting to the fires of persecution and the cross of the martyr with all the merciless vehemence of contemporary Europe, and that the story of their doings was thus projected upon

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the pages of history in appalling outlines. But the mood ultimately educated by their proceedings differed widely from the mood with which they were originally welcomed. That fact cannot be too emphatically asserted. If these Portuguese and Spanish apostles of the Nazarene together with their Japanese disciples fell victims at the last to the wrath of the nation whose heart they had come to win, the cause is to be sought in their own faults and in the intrigues of their foreign rivals rather than in the prejudice or bigotry of the Japanese. They taught to Japan the intolerance which she subsequently displayed toward themselves, and they provoked its display by their own imprudence. We cannot pause here to demonstrate these propositions by detailed reference to the annals of Christian propagandism in mediæval Japan. The broad historical facts must suffice, and in tracing them our object shall be rather to obtain indications of the nation's character than to survey the sequence of events.

During the interval of 261 years — 1281 to 1542 A. D. — that separated the Mongol in-

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vasion from the opening of intercourse between Japan and Europe, the spirit of lawless adventure prevalent throughout the Occident found its counterpart in the conduct of the Japanese. It might be supposed that their lust for fighting would have been amply sated by the perpetual domestic combats that kept their own country in a ferment from shore to shore. But although rich prizes fell to the share of the leaders in these internecine struggles, the ordinary *Samurai* gained little by them. His pay was scanty, his prospect of promotion limited, and it may well be that he sometimes turned with loathing from the constant necessity of bathing his hands in the blood of his own countrymen. At all events, piracy became a favourite occupation.

Throughout all the tumults and changes of dynasty by which China was thrown into commotion from the earliest times, Japan remained beyond the range of disturbance from abroad. Twice, indeed, armadas were directed against her by Kublai Khan, the great Manchu captain. But they were duly organised national undertakings, justifiable even by modern canons of interstate

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morality. What students of her history find remarkable is the immunity that she enjoyed from Chinese marauders. Never at any period of the Middle Kingdom's history, whether in mediæval times or in modern, have these marauders been effectually restrained by the forces at the disposal of the government. It would have been within the bounds of ordinary probability that some of them should extend their excursions to the coasts of Japan. But nothing of the kind is on record, and if it did not occur before the Mongol invasions, it was less likely to occur afterward when the annihilation of Kublai's expeditions had won respect for Japan throughout the whole of the East. The Japanese, however, showed no reciprocity of abstention. They appear to have regarded the littoral provinces of their neighbours as fair fields for raid and foray. Some historians suggest that the fiercely aggressive temper of the time was kindled, or at any rate fanned into active flame, by the Mongol assaults. But the course of events is not consistent with that theory. The defeat of Kublai's armadas, on the



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SHOTOVEN GARDEN, SAKAWA VILLAGE, TOKAIDO.

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contrary, was succeeded by an interval of comparative quiescence, partly, no doubt, because the Japanese appreciated the might of which such formidable efforts were an evidence, and partly because their sea-going capacities still remained comparatively undeveloped. But from the middle of the fourteenth century it became a species of military pastime in Japan to fit out a little fleet of war-boats and make a descent upon the coast of Korea or China. The annals of the sufferers, naturally more credible in some respects than those of the aggressors, show that what the Norsemen were to Europe in early ages, and the English to Spanish America in times contemporary with those of which we write, the Japanese were to China. They made descents upon the Shantung Promontory—the same place where their posterity in modern times were destined to annihilate China's naval forces at Wei-hai-wei—and carried their raids far inland, looting and destroying villages and towns and then marching back leisurely to the coast, where they shipped their booty and sailed away when the wind

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suited. They repeated these outrages year after year on an increasing scale, until the provinces of Fuhkien, Chehkiang, Kiangsu and Shantung—in other words, littoral regions extending over three degrees of latitude—were almost wholly overrun by the fierce freebooters. It is related in Chinese history that the commonest topics of conversation in this unhappy era were the descents of the Japanese on the dominions of the Middle Kingdom, the vessels taken by them, the towns pillaged and sacked, the provinces ravaged. They are spoken of as “sovereigns of the sea,” and although forty-nine fortresses were erected by the much-harassed people along the eastern coasts, and although one man out of every four of the sea-board population was enrolled in a coast-guard army, the raiders made nothing of such obstacles. The immemorial iteration of Chinese military experiences was again exemplified. Defeated generals laid accusations of incapacity and treachery at each other’s doors, and being all alike denounced by the censors, the best were recalled and punished and the worst left in

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command. The Japanese pirates, it should be remembered, were not backed by any reserve of national force: they were private marauders, mere soldiers of fortune, without even the open countenance or support of a feudal chieftain, though undoubtedly their enterprises were often undertaken in the secret interests of some local magnate. It stands to China's lasting humiliation that she was at last compelled to treat the freebooters as a national enemy and to move a large army against them. There is, indeed, an element of comicality in the situation as it existed at the time of which we write. China always perched upon a pedestal of ineffable loftiness; addressing her neighbours in forms of speech rigidly adapted to the height at which she supposed herself to stand above them, and solemnly registering the visits of their ambassadors as tribute-bearing missions: Japan lightly contemptuous of such pretensions; thrusting the magnificent empire's envoys into prison and keeping them there for months on some transparently petty pretext; crossing her neighbour's borders whenever and wherever she pleased and carrying away every-

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thing of interest or of value that came under her hand, yet never hesitating to send openly and courteously for a Buddhist sutra, a *celadon* vase, or a brocade altar-cloth if a desire for such objects suggested itself.

Korea underwent at Japan's hands experiences only a degree less harassing than those suffered by China, but failed altogether to find a remedy. Her feeble and ill-judged measures of retaliation served merely to provoke fresh aggression. It is unnecessary to speak of her wrongs in detail, though they must not be omitted from any analysis of the relations between the two countries in modern times.

The interest of this chapter of Japanese history consists not merely in the materials that it furnishes for estimating the quality of Japanese spirit and Japanese fighting capacity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but also in the indication that it contains of the country's attitude toward foreign commerce and foreign intercourse at that epoch. Foreign commerce was regarded, not as a factor of national wealth, but as a means of enriching a few privileged indi-

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viduals. Its profits were, for the most part, confined to two great families, the Ouchi in the case of China, and the So in the case of Korea, and restrictions were imposed upon its dimensions solely for the purpose of keeping it within reach of the prescribed control. Speaking generally, it may be said that the patronage of any one feudal chief or court noble involved the opposition or aroused the jealousy of some other, and not until the unification of the nation in modern times gave it a common interest in promoting factors of prosperity, did foreign commerce cease to be hampered by personal rivalries and political ambitions. As for foreign intercourse, its conveniences alone were considered, the obligations that it imposed being practically neglected. Japan drew freely upon China and Korea for whatever contributions they could make to her literary, religious and artistic equipment, but at the same time she allowed her subjects to pursue toward both countries a course of lawless violence that must have speedily involved her in war had either the Koreans or the Chinese seen any hope of engaging her successfully. There was no hope,

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however. She beat back their armadas; she carried fire and sword into their territories without even the semblance of a national effort; she imprisoned their envoys; she showed her total fearlessness of them in a hundred ways. But she never opposed the comings and goings of their people. There was no isolation on her side.

Such was the state of affairs when (1542) the first Europeans came to Japan. Their earliest experiences need not occupy our attention, but we may note that they arrived in a piratical Chinese junk, and that they had for fellow-passenger a scholar of the Middle Kingdom who seems to have been imbued with something of the disdainful *hauteur* toward "outer nations" characteristic of his country's literati in all ages. He introduced the Portuguese as persons without any knowledge of the canons of etiquette or the mysteries of ideographic script, unacquainted with prandial ceremonies, unable to handle chopsticks, and, in a word, only one grade higher than beasts of the field. But the Japanese paid not the slightest attention to this

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eulogy. They treated the newcomers with politeness and hospitality. The coming of Roman Catholic propagandists was subsequent by seven years to the arrival of the Portuguese adventurers at Tanegashima. They were accompanied by a young *Samurai*, called Anjiro, who had escaped the fate of a murderer by flying from his country in the piratical junk that brought the Portuguese to Tanegashima.

These are curious commentaries on the customs of the time: Japan's first Occidental visitors coming in a pirate vessel; her first preachers of Christianity employing a manslayer to interpret their homilies.

Christianity and foreign commerce presented themselves to the Japanese hand in hand, and there is no doubt that the marked success which the former achieved at first was due in large part to the favour with which the latter was regarded as a means of furnishing wealth and novel weapons of war to the feudal chieftains who enjoyed a monopoly of its control. The alien creed was, in fact, drawn from the outset into the vortex of Japanese politics, and by an

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evil chance its early patrons, though powerful at the moment, were destined soon to be stripped of their possessions and their influence. But its sun had risen high above the horizon before the first clouds made their appearance. In thirty years two hundred thousand converts were won, three monasteries, a college, a university and upwards of fifty churches were built, and it seemed as though the thirty-six provinces of which Japan then consisted might soon be included in the pale of Christendom. Such results, when compared with the achievements of missionaries in our own time, suggest either that the methods of mediæval propagandism were superior to those of modern, or that some special receptivity for religious truth existed among the Japanese of the sixteenth century. But the fact is that the imported faith profited largely by two adventitious aids—its commercial associations and the marked disfavour into which Buddhism happened to have fallen at that epoch. The latter point deserves brief attention.

At the moment when the question of the State's attitude toward Christianity had to be

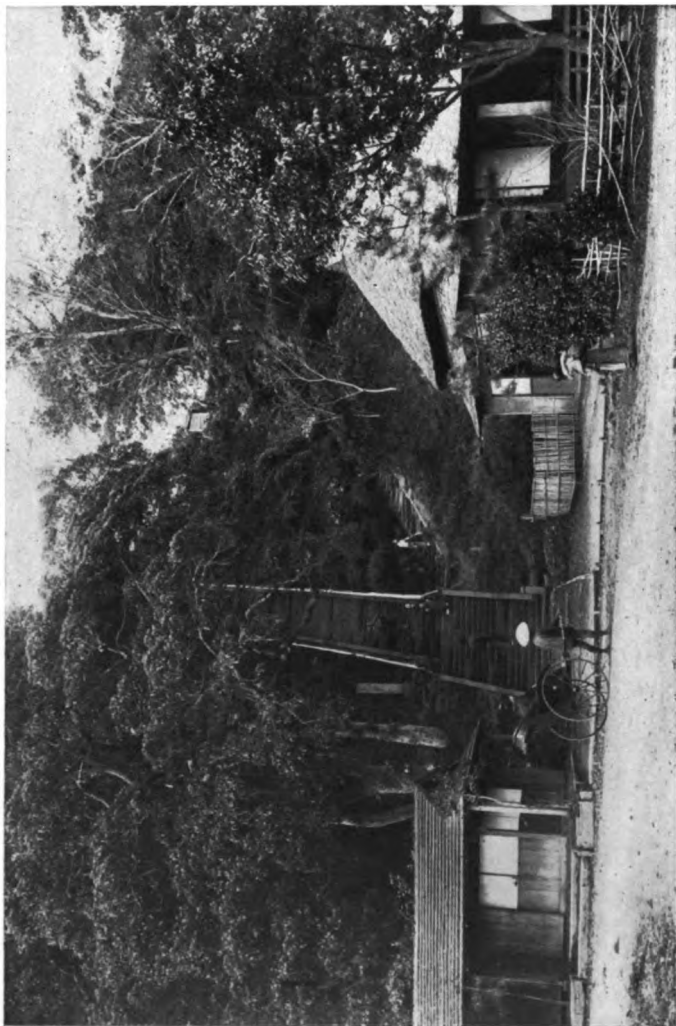


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NEGISHI AT YOKOHAMA.

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answered, Ota Nobunaga, the first of the great triumvirate who finally rescued Japan from internecine strife, was approaching the zenith of his power in central and northern Japan. He aimed at restoring the administrative authority of the Emperor and putting an end to the sanguinary struggles carried on by the feudal chiefs throughout the empire. His splendid successes soon placed him in a position to decide whether the foreign creed, already counting many disciples in the south, should be sanctioned or proscribed in the capital.

Historians delight to put wise epigrams into the mouths of illustrious men. It is related of Nobunaga that he dismissed the Christian problem by curtly observing that, since Japan already possessed a dozen different sects of religion, he saw no reason why she should not have a thirteenth. He may have couched his decision in that language, but as to the real motive of the decision there can be no doubt. He regarded the Buddhists as enemies of the State. During nearly seven centuries the arrogant pretensions of the priests had grown more and more

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defiant of official control. From an early era it had been the custom to intrust to them the care of mortuary tablets and the guardianship of tombs. Immense importance naturally attached to the discharge of such functions in a country where ancestral worship held the rank of a religion. It has already been shown, too, that the representatives of the Indian creed were closely associated with the progress of moral enlightenment and material prosperity, and that they figured prominently in maintaining relations with Japan's continental neighbours. If to that record we add the fact that, from the close of the seventh century, Buddhism had been employed to some extent by Japanese statesmen as an aid to the unification of the nation, we begin to appreciate the important position held by it in every sphere of the people's life. Rich gifts and extensive tracts of land were bestowed upon the temples, now by a superstitious sovereign or crafty statesman, now by some powerful feudal noble who desired to associate heaven with the prosecution of his ambitious designs; and in any national crisis — such as the Mongol invasions, for

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example—the coffers of the State were emptied into the sacred treasure-chests.

Prominent among the ancient superstitions of Japan was a belief that all evil influences had their abode in the northeast, the Demons' Gate (*Kimon*). Due northeast of the Imperial palace in Kyoto stood the mountain of Hiye, and there, to guard the Court against demoniacal approaches, Dengyo, a celebrated Buddhist priest of the ninth century, founded a monastery, which by and by grew to be a town of three thousand buildings, inhabited by from thirty to forty thousand monks, the great majority of whom could wield a glaive much better than they could intone a litany. The example set at Hiye-no-yama, or Hiye-zan, as the place is now called, was soon followed by other congregations of religionists, and the powerful bands of tonsured soldiers (*Sohai*) thus organised became one of the most turbulent and unmanageable elements in the State. Theological questions troubled them little. They interested themselves much more vividly in the fortunes of the nobles from whom they derived their own wealth, and since they

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soon learned to employ the shrewd device of combining esoteric and exoteric influences by carrying the holy car of Buddha in their armed processions, their enmity became as formidable as their alliance was valuable. Nothing bears stronger testimony to the religious instincts of the Japanese than the fact that, despite the violent incursions perpetually made by the monks into the domain of politics, from the time of Shirakawa's reign (1073-1087) down to the second half of the sixteenth century, the monasteries almost invariably escaped the destruction that overtook the strongholds of nobles whose cause they espoused. Nobunaga was the first to measure out ruthless justice to these truculent religionists. A soldier before everything, he had no bowels of compassion for any obstacle that barred his military path. He thought no more of putting his own brother and his wife's father to the sword, than he did of deluging a monastery with blood before he reduced it to ashes, or of setting up, with imperious inconstancy, his own effigy among the images of the gods whose fanes he had annihilated. Some of the most powerful

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Buddhist associations had sided with his political enemies, and he determined not only to root them out, but also to destroy permanently their mischievous potentialities. It was at the moment when this fury against the Buddhist priests had reached destructive heat, that the Jesuit fathers applied to Nobunaga for a charter of propagandism, and received from him an extensive grant of land in Kyoto, a yearly allowance and authority to take up their residence in the capital. The Ota chief did not care two straws about Christianity. Religion in any guise occupied an insignificant space on his moral horizon. His unique motive was to set up an opponent to the doctrine that had begotten such troublesome factors in the realm. Christianity was nothing to him for its own sake. As a rival of Buddhism it might be much.

From using the foreign faith for political purposes to suspecting it of political designs the interval was short, and Nobunaga's intelligence soon traversed it. His scrutiny of the Jesuits' methods—their profuse almsgiving, their tendance of the sick, their exercise of unprecedented

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medical skill—convinced him that they aimed at something more than saving men's souls, and he had begun to revolve plans for their expulsion when death overtook him at the hand of a traitor. But even the brief favour extended by him to Christianity had been disapproved by the man who avenged his fate and succeeded to his power, the celebrated Hideyoshi. The annals of the Jesuits ascribe to the meanest and paltriest motives the animosity that Hideyoshi ultimately displayed toward their faith. It is impossible to accept their evidently prejudiced verdict. Hideyoshi, like all Japanese of his era, was without any experience of international intercourse, but his statecraft rose to the height of genius. It is inconceivable that a man of such profound insight could fail to detect the political import of the credentials from secular authorities with which the Jesuit fathers came provided, or to appreciate the material character that the conquests of the cross might be made to assume. He had learned by heart every lesson that the annals of his own country could teach. He knew how Buddhism, originally an instrument in the hands of Japanese

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statesmen, had ultimately defied their authority, raised itself even above the Imperial Court, and developed military strength with which the most powerful feudal nobles hesitated to cross swords. The story of the very sect against which the animosity of his leader and patron, Nobunaga, burned most relentlessly, showed what even a creed of gentle tenets and refining influences like Buddhism might become in the hands of militant propagandists. He saw that Christianity evinced nothing of the eclecticism or adaptability which had prevented a collision between Buddhism and the ancestral cult of the Japanese. The Jesuit fathers spurned all compromise. The disciple of every other faith was to them an infidel, a pagan, a child of the devil. Their fierce zeal, heated white in fires of which no reflection had yet been seen on the horizon of Japan, drove them from the outset to excesses of intolerance that presaged a national catastrophe as soon as Buddhism found itself forced to fight for its life.

Hideyoshi owed much of his wonderful success to an exceptional sense of proportion. He possessed the rare gift of measuring with precision

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the strength of offence or defence that a given combination of men or things would develop under certain contingencies. Nothing is more improbable than that he underestimated the immense potentialities for resistance, or, if need be, for aggressive destructiveness, possessed by Japanese Buddhism in his time; an *imperium in imperio*, dowered with vast stores of wealth, wielding a military organisation which, were its various parts combined against a common foe, would hold the whole realm at its mercy, and historically capable of efforts so puissant even for petty purposes of sectarian squabbles that their supreme exercise in a life-and-death struggle with Christianity could not be contemplated without the gravest misgivings. Vaguely, perhaps, but still in outlines sufficiently distinct to suggest a lurid picture, these eventualities doubtless presented themselves to his strong intelligence, and as the cries of dying priests and the crash of falling temples reached his ears from Kyūshū, where the Christian propagandists were harrying their opponents with the fagot and the sword, he may well have begun to appreciate the dimensions of the impending



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It is not difficult to see or divine that a people so numerous, so energetic, and so enterprising would develop into a power of the first rank. Nothing is more apparent than that the missionaries had started the industrial revolution, and that, with the assistance, or, if need be, the opposition, of the Government, possessed by Japan the resources of a great nation, *and a nation reported in Europe*, with its vast stores of wealth, wielding a power of destruction which, were its various parts united against a common foe, would hold the world at its mercy, and historically capable of any crime, would resort even for petty purposes of national ambition to the same tactics that their supreme exercise in the struggle with Christianity could not be employed without the gravest misdeeds. It is hardly, perhaps, but still in outlines only, to suggest a lurid picture. The missionaries doubtless presented themselves as the bearers of intelligence, and as the cries of the oppressed and the crash of falling temples reached his ears from Kyōtō, where the Christian missionaries were carrying their opponents with the bagot and the sword, he may well have begun to appreciate the dimensions of the impending



THE HOT SPRINGS AT ATAMI, ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR WATERING-PLACES.

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catastrophe. He did not, however, immediately take steps to evince his disapproval of militant Christianity, nor when the time seemed ripe for proscribing it did he proceed to extremities. The crucifixion spear does not appear to have suggested itself to him as a prudent weapon for combating moral convictions. It is true that in the heat of his first anti-Christian demonstration he caused two men to be executed, and it is also true that he deprived a Christian noble of his fief by way of penalty for the constancy of his faith. But for the rest he remained content with the razing of a few chapels and a public declaration that he would not tolerate on the part of Christian propagandists any recourse to the violent methods of which the country had garnered such painful experiences in the case of the Buddhist *Sohei*, and of which the Christians had already shown themselves ruthless employers. There is nothing to show that, had Christianity thenceforth relied solely on legitimate weapons, the pulpit, education and example, paying due respect to the laws of the land and extending to others the toleration that it claimed for itself—there

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is nothing to show that it might not have retained, strengthened and extended the footing it had gained in Japan, and that the Japanese might not then have finally entered the arena of international intercourse and competition, instead of isolating themselves for nearly three centuries until they had been almost hopelessly distanced in the race of material civilisation.

But a new influence now made itself felt. The Jesuits were assailed by an enemy from within the fold. Hitherto they had been without sectarian rivals in Japan. Their precedence in the field was regarded as constituting a title to its monopoly, and a papal bull had assigned the far-Eastern islands as their special diocese. Now, however, the Spaniards took steps to dispute their ascendancy, by sending an envoy from the Philippines to complain of some alleged illegality on the part of Portuguese merchants. In the envoy's train came a number of Franciscans, and when the Jesuits remonstrated and called attention to the papal bull, the Franciscans gave a historical reply. They had observed the bull, they said, since they had not come

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as religionists but as members of an ambassador's suite, and having thus by lawful means surmounted the difficulty of getting to Japan, there was no longer any just impediment to their preaching there. Very soon they made their presence felt in a pernicious manner. Hitherto the Japanese had been left to draw their own conclusions as to the political contingencies of Christian propagandism. Thenceforth they received ample material for suspicion from the Portuguese and the Spaniards themselves, for each roundly accused the other of aggressive designs against Japan's integrity. Hideyoshi strictly interdicted any attempt at religious propagandism on the part of the Franciscans, whose presence in the capital he had sanctioned in an ambassadorial capacity only. The Franciscans paid not the smallest heed to his veto. Possibly they justified their disobedience by some casuistry as convincing as their retort to the Jesuits. If so, they failed to make the point clear to Hideyoshi. He ordered their arrest, and sent them, with three Jesuit fathers and seventeen—some records say twenty-four—native Christians,

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to Nagasaki, where they were executed. The scene was transferred to canvas by a nameless European artist of great ability. Photographs of his wonderfully realistic but little known picture reached Japan a few years ago through diplomatic channels. Crucifixion was the method of execution, but not crucifixion as practised in the Occident. The victims were tied to a cross and pierced from left and right simultaneously by sharp spears inserted below the ribs and thrust diagonally toward the shoulders. Death was generally instantaneous, but sometimes the stabs had to be repeated. The painting is true in every detail. It portrays, without exaggerating, the racial types of the victims and their slayers, the vinous swagger of the semi-brutalised executioner, the ecstatic calm of the fathers, and the awful perspective of the long line of crosses with their bleeding burdens.

This was Hideyoshi's protest, first, against the risk of Japan's becoming a battlefield for rival creeds from abroad; secondly, against the defiant attitude assumed by the strangers toward secular authority; and, thirdly, against the

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political intrigues of which the Christians accused themselves and of which he had long suspected them. It is worth while to observe these facts carefully, for they lie at the root of all Japan's foreign intercourse.

Ieyasu, the great Tokugawa chieftain, who succeeded to the work of domestic pacification already carried within sight of completion by Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, did not at first give any clear indication of the course that he intended to pursue toward the padres and their following. But there can be no doubt that the Christian problem had attracted his keen attention long before the indisputable control of administrative affairs came into his hands (1600 A. D.). No Japanese statesman could afford to ignore a question which was producing not only widespread disturbance but also a startling change in the relations between the classes. In all times one of the results of Christian propagandism in Oriental countries has been to remove the converts beyond the unchallenged control of the civil authorities and to elevate their spiritual guides to the rank of secular pro-

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tectors. The members of the Christian community learn to believe that their conversion differentiates them from the mass of their unregenerate nationals, and opens to them a tribunal of appeal against any exaction or injustice to which the latter may be exposed. Modern diplomats have often been required to consider that outcome of missionary enterprise.

A cognate problem forced itself on the attention of Japanese statesmen from a very early period. The Emperor Shirakawa (1073-1087), who at the zenith of his power complained that only three things in his realm defied his authority,—the chance of the dice, the waters of the Kamo river, and the priests of Buddha,—was ultimately obliged to invoke the assistance of the military nobles against the contumacious proceedings of the Buddhist prelates, thus inaugurating between the followers of the sword and the *sutras* an era of feuds which culminated in the fierce exterminations resorted to by Ota Nobunaga. From the outset a similar spirit of independence was educated by Christian propagandism in Japan. It is characteristic of human nature that men conspicu-

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ously prone to encroach upon the sphere of another's rights are proportionately uncompromising conservatives of their own. The Roman Catholic priest's stout defiance of pagan interference in the foreign fields of his labour was but another form of the awful zeal that impelled him to protect orthodoxy with the fagot and the rack in Europe. Ieyasu mounted the administrative throne at a time when these things forced themselves upon political attention. He had seen Franciscan monks trample upon the veto of the *Taiko* within the very shadow of the latter's palace. He had seen Christians in Nagasaki successfully ignore the order of the men appointed by Hideyoshi to restrain them. He had seen the padres resume their preaching almost immediately after the issue of Hideyoshi's prohibitory edict. He had seen the unprecedented spectacle of *heimin* (commoners) accepting from the alien creed a commission to oppose *Samurai* authority. He had seen the persecuting intolerance of the foreign faith constitute a new menace to the tranquillity which it was his hope, and seemingly his mission, to restore to his tired countrymen. We can scarcely doubt, there-

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fore, that Ieyasu was opposed to Christianity. Besides, whether from policy or conviction, he was himself a devotee of Buddhism. He carried in his bosom an image of Amida, and in seventy-three battles he had donned no armour, trusting to the protection of the god he worshipped. We have nothing to do with the quality of this great leader's piety. He may have been prompted mainly by a desire to win to his cause influences which, when opposed, had shown themselves strong and mischievous. But that a man who encouraged his followers to regard him as an incarnation of one of Yakushi's Arhats, and professed to consider a miniature eidolon of Kuro Honzon better protection than cuirass or hauberk against sword or arrow, should ever have seriously entertained the idea of countenancing Christianity, is an unreasonable supposition. On the other hand, conciliation and tolerance were essential factors in the administration of Ieyasu. He never resorted to violence where his end seemed capable of being compassed by tact. Thus, although, in the year 1600, he proclaimed his policy by means of an edict banishing Christian propagandists, as the *Taiko* had done in

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1517, like the *Taiko* he took no conclusive steps to enforce the order. For a moment, indeed, it seemed as though the edict would be followed by drastic measures. Shortly after its issue the Christian places of worship in Kyoto were destroyed and several followers of the faith met their death. But active persecution ceased there, so far as the central authorities were concerned. In the provinces, however, the Christians had to endure suffering. They reaped as they had sown. We need not enter into details. They bear further testimony to the fact that the fortunes of the Western creed in each district depended on the prejudice or caprice of the feudal chief governing the province, and were consequently exposed to many of the intrigues, jealousies and ambitions which disfigured the era.

Ieyasu made no attempt to interfere between the victims and their local persecutors. He had announced his disapproval of Christianity and he waited on the course of events. Meanwhile, despite local opposition and the nominal ban of the central government, the foreign creed constantly gained. In the year 1605 the number of converts

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was estimated at from six hundred thousand to two millions, and from Sendai in the north to Kagoshima in the south its propagandists preached openly and its adherents worshipped in their own chapels. The time had come to choose between final toleration and resolute extirpation. "It is much easier," says Lecky, "to show what men did or taught than to realise the state of mind that rendered possible such actions or teaching." The whole of the Tokugawa chief's career up to the time of which we are now writing is the career of a lover of mercy, a user of gentle methods, a believer in the softening influences of time. How was the conviction forced upon such a man that he must do violence to his instincts? How was he persuaded to issue on January 27, 1614, a proclamation ordering the banishment of the propagandists and leaders of Christianity, the destruction of their churches and the compulsory recantation of their doctrines? Probably the genuine and complete explanation of Ieyasu's motive is to be found in the words of the edict itself: "The Christians have come to Japan not only to carry on commerce with their ships, but also to propagate an evil

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creed and subvert the true doctrine, to the end that they may effect a change of government in the country and thus usurp possession of it. This seed will produce a harvest of unhappiness. It must be eradicated." That Ieyasu and his son, Hidetada, in whose favour he had abdicated the *Shogunate* nine years previously to the issue of the above edict, were fully persuaded of the truth of these words, there can be little question. It only remains to inquire how they were led to entertain such a belief; why they deemed it necessary to exchange their previous attitude of negative disapproval for one of positive extermination.

Several reasons present themselves. The first is the issue of a bull in 1608 granting to all orders of Christianity free access to Japan. From the point of view of Rome the step was natural. Japan had hitherto been a papally forbidden land to all save the Jesuits. Paul the Fifth simply rescinded the veto. But from the point of view of Ieyasu the incident assumed a very different aspect. The *Taiko* had issued an edict ordering the withdrawal of all Christian

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propagandists from Japan. The *Shogun* had repeated the interdict. The Pope of Rome ignored both vetoes and authoritatively threw Japan open to Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, anybody and everybody wearing a cowl or carrying a Testament. The second reason is that Ieyasu found in Christianity a formidable obstacle to the realisation of his own political projects. After the battle of Sekigahara there remained only one source of possible peril to the peace which it was the Tokugawa leader's highest ambition to secure for his country. That source was Hideyori, the *Taiko's* son. It has been alleged that the *Taiko*, on the eve of death, sought and obtained from Ieyasu a promise to support Hideyori. But the scope of the promise is obscure. At all events, Ieyasu did not consider himself bound by it further than to leave to Hideyori undisturbed possession of Osaka castle and of ample revenues. Hideyori's principal supporters took a different view, however. They intrigued to effect the overthrow of the Tokugawa, and the Jesuit fathers threw in their lot with them, as did also a multitude of Chris-

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tians. The castle at Osaka with its stupendous battlements and almost impregnable defences became a resort for persecuted or discontented Christians from all parts of the empire. The padres can scarcely be reproached for the part they chose at that crisis. Scarcely a faint hope remained that their faith would ever be sanctioned by the Tokugawa, whereas with the *Taiko's* son at the head of the administration and owing his elevation in a large degree to Christian aid, there would have dawned for the fathers and their flock an era not merely of State tolerance but also of patronage beyond all precedent or expectation. Then indeed events might have justified the premature pæan of the Dillingen chronicler, that Japan had been "won over and incorporated into the true fold of the Christian church." Such a prize was worth playing for at heavy risks. The padres played for it and failed. Ieyasu's sentence of banishment and extermination overtook them in 1614, and in the following year Osaka castle was given to the flames after a struggle that is said to have cost a hundred thousand lives.

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Yet another reason for the Tokugawa chief's recourse to drastic measures must be noted. The Dutch, concluding a commercial convention with Japan in 1610, naturally sought to oust the Portuguese from the monopoly that they held of Japanese trade, and to that end they roundly accused both Portuguese and Spaniards of prostituting Christian propaganda to political intrigue, and concealing designs against Japan's integrity under the cloak of her religious regeneration. The English, who soon afterwards gained access to Japan's markets, adopted the tactics of the Dutch. It was easy to show from contemporary history that such accusations rested on bases at least highly plausible. Nobunaga had more than suspected something of the kind thirty years before either Dutch or English preferred the accusation; Hideyoshi had shared the suspicion, and Ieyasu, with a wider range of experience to guide him, would probably have passed from suspicion to certainty even without the testimony of Hollanders or British. A good deal has been urged in modern times by way of apology for the conduct of the English and

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Dutch. Some have even denied the charge on behalf of one or the other, or both. We fail to see any occasion for either repudiation or extenuation. If we consider the relations between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, between England and Spain, and between Holland and Portugal at that era, and if we recall the canons of commercial combats and the rules of the religious lists at the beginning of the seventeenth century, we shall see that things fell out in Japan exactly as might have been predicted.

Looking at the facts as here set down, the impartial historian is compelled to admit that what Japan did in 1614, most European states would have done under the same circumstances at the same epoch. The impartial historian will probably go a great deal farther. He will conclude that the measures of expulsion and eradication adopted by Japan in 1614 would have been adopted forty or fifty years earlier by any European state under pressure of the same incentives. No European state would have tolerated for a moment the things that were perpetrated in the

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name of Christianity between 1560 and 1576 in Nagasaki and Bungo, and between 1597 and 1600 in Higo. No European state would have suffered the propagandists of a foreign faith to settle within its borders and excite a section of its population to make a holocaust of the national places of worship, and to stone, slaughter and banish their priests. If Japan endured these outrages for a time, it was because her strength of national self-assertion was paralysed by its dissipation. The central administration had no power to prescribe a uniform policy to the multitude of irresponsible and semi-independent principalities into which the country was divided, and in the rival ambitions of the various territorial magnates whose cause they promoted with arms and gold the missionaries found temporary safety and patronage. The integration of the empire, first under Hideyoshi, subsequently and more completely under Ieyasu, was the signal for recourse to measures which, were they embodied in a chapter of contemporary Occidental history, would not have seemed either incongruous or abnormal.

INTERCOURSE: FOREIGN COUNTRIES

We shall not attempt to describe the struggle that ensued between religious fanaticism and the exterminating zeal of officials who believed themselves to be obeying the highest instincts of patriotic statecraft. The story has already occupied many pens. Besides, our purpose here is not to trace the mere sequence of incidents, but to expose their causes. Terrible things were done, things worthy of Torquemada and Ximenes, and the long tragedy culminated in a rebellion which involved the death of from thirty to forty thousand Christians, and the final expulsion of the Portuguese from Japan. The rebellion—celebrated in history as the “Shimabara Revolt”—was brought to a close in the spring of 1638.

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